



Noble Ideals and Bloody Realities

Warfare in the Middle Ages

Edited by Niall Christie and Maya Yazigi

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NOBLE IDEALS AND BLOODY REALITIES

HISTORY OF WARFARE

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VOLUME 37



NOBLE IDEALS AND BLOODY REALITIES

Warfare in the Middle Ages

EDITED BY

NIALL CHRISTIE AND MAYA YAZIGI



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For Steph and Mark

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NOTES ON ARABIC TRANSLITERATION AND REFERENCES

The Arabic transliteration in this volume represents a simplified version of that used in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition, except that *jīm* is indicated with a *j* and *qaf* is indicated with a *q*. Underlining is omitted from letters usually indicated in the *EI* with multiple underlined Latin characters, such as *dhal* (dh) or *shin* (sh). Macrons and diacritics are omitted; it has been assumed that those familiar with Arabic will be able to understand which letters are being used in each case.

The references in this volume follow the guidelines of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th Edition, except that where appropriate references to ancient and medieval sources in the original languages are made using other standard formats (such as book.chapter.line or book.chapter).

INTRODUCTION

There is nothing new in saying that warfare was an important factor in the formation and evolution of medieval society. Wars dictated political boundaries, stimulated or depressed commerce and economic growth, and touched the lives of members of all social classes. Wars led to advances in technology and science, contributed to developments in the articulation of theological thought, and provoked various forms of literary and artistic expression. Warfare was a universal undertaking, transcending political and regional boundaries and having an impact on all aspects of life in the period. Despite this widespread nature, many of the root characteristics of warfare were similar regardless of the geographical location or the politico-religious character of the theatres in which it took place.

Warfare in theory and warfare in practice rarely resembled each other. While theological and political tracts presented an abstract perception of war that frequently highlighted its positive features, be they religious merit or noble characteristics, the actual conduct of war was periodically marred by practical realities, which often diverged from the ideal. Political ambition and greed for worldly gain often supplanted gallant morals and chivalry, and conditions on the ground frequently necessitated unlikely or (in the eyes of some) immoral alliances, the turning of a blind eye to illegal or morally questionable activities, and various forms of brutality.

Warfare continues to hold a popular appeal in the world today that extends to the academic community. The topic has attracted the attention of scholars from various disciplines throughout the centuries, and the scholarly perception of its many aspects continues to evolve as more evidence becomes available and new sources or readings thereof require many accepted truths to be reconsidered and re-analyzed.

The contributions presented in this volume address a number of issues related to the topic of medieval warfare from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and examining a number of geographical regions. The contributors analyze social and economic issues, military strategy, technological and medical developments, ideology and rhetoric, and present studies of warfare in Europe, the Byzantine Empire and

the Muslim world. In doing this, they seek to investigate warfare not only as a military pursuit but also as a social phenomenon.

The articles in this volume are arranged in three thematic sections. Part One, "Noble Ideals: Perceptions of Warfare," presents three articles examining the theoretical conception of medieval warfare in the minds of those who experienced or witnessed it. David Hay pays particular attention to non-combatants in his article, "'Collateral Damage?' Civilian Casualties in the Early Ideologies of Chivalry and Crusade." Hay shows that there were a variety of opinions and theories proposed by medieval thinkers to justify or critique the waging of war, especially violence perpetrated against non-combatants. He also discusses the relation between such theories and the actual practices of soldiers, observing that the Peace of God and Truce of God movements of the period had considerable if in some cases limited influence on their actions.

Broadening the scope of the enquiry somewhat, and observing that many military historians have been studying the phenomenon of warfare from cultural and technological perspectives, in "Medieval Warfare and the Value of a Human Life" Kelly DeVries distinguishes himself from either viewpoint (both of which he deems unsatisfactory) by bringing to attention the value placed on human life in general in the Middle Ages. Taking this as his primary focus, DeVries proves that this factor greatly influenced the conduct of medieval warfare. The high value placed on the life of soldiers (and to a lesser extent non-combatants), he argues, is reflected in three developments: the evolution of medieval armor, intended to protect the individual soldier; the development of fortifications, aimed at societal protection; and improvements in military surgery, potentially reversing failures of the previous two forms of protection.

In "Religious Campaign or War of Conquest? Muslim Views of the Motives of the First Crusade," Niall Christie addresses a different theoretical question related to medieval warfare. Surveying the perception of the motives of the early crusaders as depicted in the Muslim sources, he shows that his sources ascribed a variety of impetuses to the arrival of the Latin Christian invaders. Motives of revenge for earlier wrongs, greed for plunder or territory, religious expansion and sheer malice are all found in the sources, but only one, the Damascene jurist *ʿAlī ibn Tahir al-Sulami* (d. 1106), appears to have been aware that the crusaders were fighting a holy war. Christie observes that it is not clear whether the apparent ignorance

of the other sources stems from genuine lack of knowledge or a desire to avoid the risk of granting even the vaguest legitimacy to the crusaders' actions.

The six articles that make up Part Two, "Bloody Realities: War in Practice," turn from theoretical perceptions to more practical issues, addressing a range of different case studies that portray both the direct and indirect effects of warfare on those who experienced them. John France, in "Thinking about Crusader Strategy," demonstrates that the crusades, especially in the 12th century, formed part of overall papal strategy, intended above all to assert church control over the states of western Europe, promote Christianity and foster diplomatic relations with the Byzantine Empire. France also examines the strategies of the political powers of the Latin states, showing that practical concerns meant that their choices did not always align with the papal vision, something that ultimately contributed to the downfall of the crusader states.

Piers Mitchell addresses a rather more graphic issue in "The Torture of Military Captives in the Crusades to the Medieval Middle East." He shows that torture was a widespread activity used by both Christians and Muslims for a variety of military, financial, punitive, psychological and judicial objectives, or even simply as a form of morale-boosting entertainment. Various techniques were employed in the period, ranging from the crudely brutal to the carefully orchestrated. Mitchell concludes with an attempt to understand the attitudes of contemporary Latin Christians towards the use of torture. Noting that few writers contemporary with the Crusades address this issue, he nevertheless draws some enlightening conclusions from some observations found in the sources.

In "Holy War, Royal Wives, and Equivocation in Twelfth-Century Jerusalem," Deborah Gerish focuses on the tension between royal consorts' gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation and royal status in the first Kingdom of Jerusalem. She shows that female royal consorts were generally marginalized from public affairs unless they could positively affect the holy war, the defining feature of royal identity in the period. This marginalization was normally exacerbated if the consort in question was a religious or ethnic outsider to Latin Christian society, leading the sources to regard her with suspicion. She shows that this situation was in contrast to that in most of western Europe, where queens played an important role in defining royal identity, a contrast that Gerish attributes to the overwhelming concern with

holy war in the Levantine context and the effect of more common unions between Latin Christian rulers and women of other ethnic or religious backgrounds.

Paula Stiles shifts our attention to Spain, where she addresses an aspect of the co-operation between religious groups in her article, "Arming the Enemy: Non-Christians' Roles in the Military Culture of the Crown of Aragon during the *Reconquista*." She demonstrates that non-Christians participated in many facets of the military culture of the kingdom, explaining why they were encouraged to stay in conquered territories, why they chose to do so and why they were trusted with some military duties and rarely betrayed their cities to foreign co-religionists. Stiles shows that municipal identities came to supersede religious or ethnic ones, leading to this rather unusual state of affairs.

Part Two closes with two papers on medieval England. In "Communal Piracy in Medieval England's Cinque Ports," David Sylvester investigates why the Barons of the Cinque Ports came to be seen as the epitome of English piracy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, despite both their legal (sometimes quasi-legal) naval service to the crown and the fact that they were not the only ones who engaged in frequent activities of this type. He shows that a number of factors affected their image, with the situation being further complicated by the fact that the boundary between official raiding and piracy was often blurred during the period.

Ilana Krug, in "Wartime Corruption and Complaints of the English Peasantry," shows that corrupt practices conducted in the king's name also occurred on land. Focusing on the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, she discusses how England's involvement in warfare affected peasants who were not only expected to contribute officially to the war effort but were also often victimized by the abuse and corruption endemic to any prolonged situation of war, especially in matters of taxation and purveyance. Krug dwells on the methods of corruption that surfaced during this period, and taking into account many types of sources (judicial records, literary treatises and political songs and poems), she examines the peasantry's complaints about and responses to these corrupt practices.

In Part Three, "Unto the Breach: Re-examining Issues in Medieval and Modern Military Historiography," three contributors re-assess some of the extant notions relating to Islamic, Byzantine and European conduct of war. Hugh Kennedy's "The Military Revolution and the

Early Islamic State” addresses developments in warfare as it was waged in the seventh to eleventh centuries in the Muslim world. Starting from the well-established notion that technological changes in warfare affect the evolution of political society, Kennedy examines how this phenomenon applies to the evolution of the early Islamic state. To make his case he focuses in particular on the introduction of two important innovations in Islamic warfare, namely the use of stirrups and the development of mounted archery. He shows that both Arabic literary sources and depictions in Islamic art stress the novel nature of this technology and its universal and speedy adoption by the Muslim armies. He sees that by the early to mid ninth century the combination of both of these technologies was perceptible on the ground and led to both a permanent change in the primary method of fighting and the creation of expensive armies of professional soldiers to replace the tribal armies mainly used thus far. Kennedy also discusses the negative consequences of the latter development on the long term political, administrative, social and economic well-being of the early ‘Abbasid state.

Warren Treadgold investigates Byzantine attitudes towards warfare in “Byzantium, the Reluctant Warrior.” He shows that the general Byzantine inclination, at least as far as external conflict was concerned, was to defensive war, be it actual defense of frontiers or reconquest of lost territories. This tendency was reinforced by the fact that only such defensive wars were regarded as being morally and religiously justifiable. In addition, the risks to one’s own political and personal security that waging external, offensive warfare entailed made the Byzantine emperors reluctant to pursue it. Treadgold then turns to the issue of civil wars and the Byzantines’ greater willingness to engage in them, a topic that has hitherto received relatively little attention. He shows that despite the Byzantine disinclination to wage external wars, there were numerous civil wars that took place in the course of Byzantine history (he counts 120 in total between 285 and 1461), a fact that he attributes to the ease with which they could be justified once they were over and the rich prizes that could be won by the victor.

In the final article of the volume, “Reynald of Châtillon and the Red Sea Expedition of 1182–83,” Marcus Milwright offers a re-examination of this infamous incident in Reynald’s career and the objective ascribed to it by some Arabic sources, namely the removal of the Prophet’s remains from Medina. Milwright speculates on the

potential validity of such claims by studying the context of Reynald's life and his possible experience and awareness of Muslim ritual practices relating to the dead and their remains. Milwright concludes that given the clear veneration that many Muslims accorded to the graves of holy figures (in contradiction of official Muslim teaching), such an accusation may not actually have been that far-fetched, and Reynald may indeed have considered the looting of Muhammad's remains as being a potentially profitable enterprise.

It is clear from the range of concerns and issues raised in this volume that warfare had an impact on the individual at all levels of medieval society, regardless of their ethnic, regional, religious or professional affiliation. War could have an equal, or even greater, impact on the non-combatant peasant than it did on the knight on the battlefield. This widespread impact is reflected in the wide variety of sources that shed light on its features and the reactions of those who experienced it, either directly or indirectly. The images of warfare presented in their pages range from the heroic to the corrupt, the pious to the heretical, and the attractive to the repellant; attitudes to warfare then, as now, remain a diverse mixture of noble ideals and bloody realities.

*

The majority of the articles in this volume arise from papers presented at the 33rd Medieval Workshop at the University of British Columbia in 2003. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the conference participants for their timely cooperation during the compilation of this volume and to recognize with gratitude the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Committee for Medieval Studies at the University of British Columbia. Finally, we would like to express our appreciation for the editorial assistance of Jane Roy, Kelly DeVries, Marcella Mulder and Julian Deahl.

Niall Christie and Maya Yazigi
Vancouver, 2005

PART ONE

NOBLE IDEALS:
PERCEPTIONS OF WARFARE

"COLLATERAL DAMAGE?" CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN THE EARLY IDEOLOGIES OF CHIVALRY AND CRUSADE

David J. Hay

In the rhetorical skirmishing that preceded the American invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, both sides wielded the potent imagery of medieval warfare. President George W. Bush initially attempted to muster international support for military intervention in Afghanistan by labeling the offensive a "crusade." He was soon forced to distance himself from this characterization when advisors informed him that in the Muslim world the term crusade (*al-hamalat al-salibiyya*) immediately conjures visions of fanatical Christian invaders butchering defenseless women and children.¹ In February of 2003, Saddam Hussein appealed to Muslim conceptions of chivalry to denounce Bush's impending campaign against Iraq. He told a Lebanese delegation that the Iraqis were angry and would fight ferociously because "their enemy did not even show the minimum of manliness and chivalry."² Clearly, the popular images of the chivalric knight and fanatical crusader retain their power to shape public opinion and color contemporary views on the morality of war. But were medieval knights really any more moderate, or crusaders any more barbaric, than modern soldiers are? Did medieval soldiers and military theorists use euphemisms such as "collateral damage" (a phrase that emerged during the first Gulf War) to deflect criticism from the deaths they caused? When we in the modern world invoke the crusader and the knight—whether as exemplars or cautionary tales—are we perpetuating wildly unrealistic expectations about our ability either to loose or to limit the destructive power of war?

¹ In the same week, the Pentagon was compelled to rename the offensive "Operation Enduring Freedom" after Muslim scholars critiqued its original codename, "Operation Infinite Justice." The scholars pointed out that only God could mete out *infinite* justice. In choosing such a title, George Bush was thus inadvertently claiming to be God. Geoffrey Nunberg, "A Name Too Far," *San Jose Mercury News, Sunday Perspectives Section*, 30 September 2001: <<http://www-csl.stanford.edu/~nunberg/operations.html>> (12 August 2004).

² "White House Pushes on with New U. N. Resolution," CNN.com, 24 February 2003: <<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/02/23/sprj.irq.iraq.wrap/>> (12 August 2004).

To begin to answer these questions, we must first recall some of the major differences separating medieval from modern forms of war. Firstly, medieval warfare was rarely total war, a fact that had more to do with logistics than altruism. Programs of genocide and ethnic cleansing long remained impractical because military leaders—and rulers in general—had not yet developed the mass media and administrative tools necessary to mobilize and manage economies on a modern scale. In this respect, the crusade would mark something of a departure. Even during the crusades, however, inherent economic incentives and logistical restraints continued to mitigate the worst excesses of war. In most of the areas they conquered, the crusaders themselves simply were not numerous enough to consider the wholesale displacement, deportation or destruction of native peoples. Thus, Muslim, Jewish and Native Christian laborers, craftspeople and merchants constituted the majority of both the populations and the taxpayers of the “Crusader States.”

The nature of medieval military technology also tended to limit the effects of war. Given the weaponry of the time, soldiers usually had to make a conscious decision to target civilians before being able to harm them physically. They had to identify individual targets with their own eyes, get close enough to deliver a blow with sword or spear and immediately confront the often gruesome effects of their own violent actions. The fatigue and psychological stress involved in killing serve as substantial deterrents in most forms of war,³ but they were more pronounced and immediate in a world devoid of “fire and forget” missiles or “weapons of mass destruction.”

These logistical and technological constraints were counterbalanced, however, by other distinctly medieval factors that occasionally made warfare more dangerous for noncombatants. One of these was the prevalence of sieges, which, as specialists in medieval European warfare have established, were more common than pitched battles (at least during the high and late Middle Ages).⁴ Sieges were especially

³ Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (Boston: Little Brown, 1995). Cf. the earlier and more controversial study by S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (Washington: Combat Forces Press, 1947).

⁴ For a more detailed explanation of why siege warfare prevailed, see John Gillingham, “Richard I and the Science of War in the Middle Ages,” in *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J. O. Prestwich*, ed. John Gillingham and J. C. Holt (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1984), 197 and 206–7.

dangerous to civilians not only because they turned residences into battlefields but also because sieges provided medieval soldiers with one of their few opportunities to use indirect and indiscriminate weapons. Most medieval artillery pieces, including catapults and, later, trebuchets, were so difficult to move and aim that they were deployable only in sieges. They also fired projectiles in high or indirect trajectories that could carry them over defending walls and into civilian areas. Some other weapons in the besiegers' arsenal—starvation, thirst, arson—also killed indiscriminately. Indeed, fire was so endemic to medieval warfare that King Henry V of England is said to have remarked, “war without fire is like sausages without mustard.”⁵

Medieval systems of military organization also failed to accommodate sharp distinctions between soldiers and civilians, and their inability to discriminate increased the likelihood of civilian casualties. The ad hoc field armies of the Middle Ages included a diversity of troop types, from household retainers and aristocratic vassals to militia and mercenaries. Their terms of service were often strictly limited (forty or sixty days per year in the case of many vassals) and their allegiances sometimes mixed (many knights performed homage to multiple lords). Most of them bought their own clothing and equipment, which they chose out of personal preference rather than a desire for uniformity. It is true, however, that some units bore emblems or distinctive clothing, and by the end of the Middle Ages, heraldry had developed sufficiently for soldiers to single out high-ranking individuals. In addition, soldiers could sometimes distinguish between themselves and their enemies by national dress (a Frank and a Lombard, for example, wore different types and styles of clothing). But such costumes did not differentiate soldier from civilian, and they were poor substitutes for standardized uniforms. The fact that nobles maintained their own private armies and had the right to bear weapons openly in both peace and war further complicated matters. Again, these problems were most acute in sieges, particularly sieges of fortified towns. When these were besieged, all able-bodied, adult males—not just the nobles, but also civilians with very little or no military training—were often impressed into service on

⁵ “il respondit [. . .] que guerre sans feu ne valoit rien, non plus que andouilles sans moustarde.” Juvenal des Usins, *Histoire de Charles VI*, in *Choix des Chroniques*, ed. J. A. Buchon et al. (Paris: A. Desrez, 1875), 565, quoted in Gillingham, “Richard I,” 201.

the walls.⁶ In such conditions, even the most conscientious soldiers would be hard pressed to tell noncombatant from combatant.

How then did the arrival of chivalry and crusading in the High Middle Ages alter these circumstances? Chivalry and crusading first coalesced as practices and institutions in the High Middle Ages (1000–1300 c.e.). When aristocratic cavalry answered the papacy's call for an armed pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1095, the nomenclature was still in its infancy. Words that distinguished crusaders (Lat. *crucesignati*) from other pilgrims (Lat. *peregrini*) did not gain wide currency until the latter part of the twelfth century, which has led some historians to question whether there were any real crusades before then.⁷ But as Thomas Madden points out, the lack of original terminology does not prove the absence of a practice.⁸ People can struggle for decades to find adequate words for new phenomena, or they can gradually change their usage of older terms. Our modern English word chivalry, for example, derives from the Old French *chevalerie*, which is itself derived from the Latin *caballus* (slang for a riding or pack horse). *Chevalerie* originally meant simply a group of horsemen and their military skills, rather than a specific order or code of conduct. During the course of the so-called feudal revolution, however, the heavily armed cavalry soldier (Fr. *chevalier*, Lat. *miles*, Mod. Eng. knight) gradually rose in status to form a new social class. The remainder of the secular aristocracy increasingly identified with this order and accepted that its function and *raison d'être* was to fight. The term chivalry never lost its original meaning, but by the middle of the thirteenth century it had also come to apply to the knights' distinctive ethos.⁹

⁶ On the erosion of the soldier/civilian distinction at the end of the Roman Empire, see Ramsay MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963). On the impressment of "civilians" into service on medieval walls in the early Middle Ages, see Bernard S. Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare: Prelude to Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 52–4. For the later period, see David Eltis, "Towns and Defence in Later Medieval Germany," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 33 (1989): 91–103.

⁷ Christopher Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), esp. 27–8.

⁸ Thomas Madden, review of *The Invention of the Crusades* by Christopher Tyerman, *The Historian*, Spring 2000 <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2082/is_3_62/ai_62828809> (12 August 2004).

⁹ Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 1–2; Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4; Glyn S. Burgess, "The Term 'Chevalerie' in Twelfth-Century French," *Medieval Codicology, Iconography, Literature, and Translation: Studies for Keith Val*

Did this ethos ensure that the knights of the High Middle Ages behaved more humanely than the soldiers of the Early Middle Ages? Here we must distinguish between chivalric practice and chivalric theory.¹⁰ In regards to practice, the period of the rise of the knights (*milites*) coincided with important changes in the treatment of prisoners. The most notable of these was the decline of slavery as a consequence of defeat in battle. Early medieval Europe had inherited from the ancient and prehistoric worlds patterns of conduct, which, for simplicity's sake, I will call out-group (interspecific) and in-group (intraspecific) warfare. The treatment of prisoners in conflicts between peoples that perceived one another as "others" (members of an out-group) was generally harsher than in wars between peoples who considered one another to be part of their in-group. Ethologists, anthropologists and sociologists have noted the similarities between human conflict and that of other animals in this regard. Intraspecific violence is usually competitive, highly ritualized and non-lethal, whereas interspecific is predatory, unembellished and lethal. Thus the piranha refrains from using its fearsome teeth in conflicts with other piranha.¹¹ In the human societies of the classical world, the general custom in out-group warfare was to kill military leaders and adult males who took up arms but to reduce noncombatants and combatants who surrendered to slavery. Some individuals and incidents did not fit the pattern, of course. The Book of Joshua records that the monotheistic Jews executed not only the noncombatants but even the animals they seized at Jericho.¹² Apparently, their covenant with Yahweh led them to fear religious pollution in the lands that He had promised to them. Cyrus and Alexander the Great, on the other hand, won reputations for magnanimity by *not* reducing defeated out-groups to slavery. But Jewish fanaticism and Persian/Macedonian multiculturalism stand out because they were so unusual; they are exceptions that prove the general rule. For over

Sinclair, eds. Peter Rolfe Monks and D. D. R. Owen (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 343–58.

¹⁰ Cf. Sidney Painter's distinction between "secular" and "religious" chivalry in his *French Chivalry: Chivalric Ideas and Practices in Mediaeval France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940).

¹¹ Robert L. O'Connell, *Of Arms and Men: A History of War, Weapons and Aggression* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 13–29. In humans, one exception to this general rule seems to be cases of civil war.

¹² Joshua 6:21.

a thousand years, the Romans routinely enslaved foreign captives. They believed that their word for “slave” (*servus*) derived from the word *servare*, meaning “to spare the life of a prisoner.”¹³ Indeed, we should not properly characterize enslavement as collateral damage in classical out-group campaigns, since the taking of slaves was often a primary objective of war. There was nothing ‘collateral’ about it. Slave labor and the slave trade drove the economy of the ancient world.

Slavery had been declining for centuries before the emergence of chivalry. When the Western Roman Empire fell, the Roman system of slave-gangs working plantations to produce goods for export collapsed with it. Later, at the turn of the ninth century, Charlemagne (r. 768–814) succeeded in reuniting most of western Europe for the first time since the fall of Rome, but his new empire was never so heavily dependent upon slave labor as the old. Moreover, although his kingdom disintegrated in the ninth century, his conquests and cultural initiatives expanded the Christian in-group by imposing some degree of legal, linguistic and religious uniformity on mainland Europe. At the same time, the Catholic Church put varying degrees of pressure on soldiers not to enslave fellow Christians. By the eleventh century, the enslavement of Christians by Christians had ceased to be a regular consequence of war in much of Europe.¹⁴ The rapid expansion of the Church throughout the continent also ensured that non-Christian captives would be harder to find.

Chivalry did not bring about all of these changes, then, but it did contribute to them by offering a more humane or in-group custom as a viable and profitable alternative to slavery: the practice of ransoming. If soldiers could no longer take slaves, they had to find other ways of supporting themselves, especially since money was scarce and wage labor virtually nonexistent. Instead of executing combatants and selling the noncombatants into slavery, therefore, knights

¹³ Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 7–9; A. Berger, “Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 43 (1953): 704 (*servus*) and 427 (*editio*).

¹⁴ Matthew Strickland, “Slaughter, Slavery or Ransom? The Impact of the Conquest on Conduct in Warfare” in *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Carola Hicks (Stamford, England: Paul Watkins, 1992), 41–60; Strickland, “Killing or Clemency? Ransom, Chivalry and Changing Attitudes to Defeated Opponents in Britain and Northern France, 7–12th Centuries,” in *Krieg im Mittelalter*, ed. Hans-Henning Kortüm (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 93–122.

made a profit by selling prisoners back to their kin, comrades or communities.

The decline in slavery and the rise of chivalry did not mean that all captives received better treatment. Although knights tended to show wealthier prisoners more respect in the High Middle Ages, they could treat worse than slaves any who refused or were unable to pay ransoms. Medieval castles came equipped with dungeons, after all. Thus, the authors of the chivalric romances of the twelfth century usually confined their use of the term *chevalerie* to its older meaning of a group of knights and their military skills/deeds. The term had not yet acquired its modern connotations of courtesy towards women and a general desire to protect the weak.¹⁵ Writers like Orderic Vitalis could describe King William II of England (r. 1087–1100) as “famous in the field of chivalry” (*militia clarus*) even though he “greatly oppressed the poor inhabitants of his kingdom and took from them by force the wealth that he lavished on strangers.”¹⁶ Chivalry, then, initially had next to nothing to do with ordinary people.¹⁷ Since the poorer prisoners could neither be enslaved nor pay ransoms, they were of little use to the knights. Sometimes they were simply executed.¹⁸

Did knights dismiss their harsh treatment of poorer prisoners and the peasantry as collateral damage or did they view it as an essential feature of war making? Some of the *milites* took steps to prevent the destruction of civilian lives and property.¹⁹ Others, however, clearly viewed civilians as a separate and contemptible species—that is, an out-group that must be kept in subjection with liberal doses of violence. The knight and troubadour Bertran de Born, for example, eagerly anticipated the onset of war. “We’ll take the usurers’ money,” he unabashedly crowed, “and never a mule-driver will travel the roads in safety, nor a burgher without fear, nor a merchant coming from France. He who gladly takes will be rich.” For Bertran, a

¹⁵ Burgess, “The Term ‘Chevalerie,’” in *Medieval Codicology*.

¹⁶ Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969–80), X.2, 200–2. See also X.5, 214 and X.8, 238 and 244.

¹⁷ Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 176–85.

¹⁸ Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066–1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 30 and 288.

¹⁹ E.g. Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 214.

declaration of war gave carte blanche to abuse the peasantry; it ensured, in his own words, that “the world will be good.”²⁰ Like a mafia hit, the death and destruction Bertran’s campaigns caused sent out a powerful message about his place in the social hierarchy.

The systematic ravaging of territory also had more direct military applications that endeared it to soldiers and commanders alike. Most knights viewed arson and pillaging as effective means of forcing enemies to offer battle and undermining their ability to make war. Jordan Fantosme’s chronicle has King William of Scotland proclaim, “Thus should war be begun. Such is my advice: first lay waste the land.”²¹ The destruction he advocated was not wanton. Once the enemy had been deprived of supplies, enemy castles became more vulnerable to assault and blockade, and the enemy army might be compelled to confront the invader. The tactic was all the more effective because it supplied the knights with plunder, which had become another substitute for regular wages. Knights thus preferred to live off the fruits of enemy territory (or even, in a pinch, “friendly” lands, where they simply renamed their pillaging “requisitioning”). Many knights, then, had quite an appetite for destruction. They did not consider their depredations to be a “collateral” effect of their wars but rather an essential feature that achieved specific military and political objectives. Fire and plundering were far more than just the mustard on their sausages.

In contrast to chivalry’s practitioners, its theorists were deeply disturbed by the ravages of war. This was primarily because almost all of the theoretical literature was written by civilians. From at least the late tenth century on, a parade of clerical authors and legislators made concerted attempts to limit destruction by denouncing the violent actions of contemporary knighthood. They painted an alternative image of “religious chivalry” and contrasted it favorably with their own portrait of the debased secular chivalry.²² The advocates of this Peace Movement declared that lawful knights acknowledged

²⁰ Bertran de Born, *The Poems of the Troubadour Bertran de Born*, trans. William D. Paden Jr., Tilde Sankovitch and Patricia H. Stäblein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 398–9, quoted in Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 176.

²¹ Jordan Fantosme, *Chronicle*, trans. R. C. Johnston (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 11.439–50, cited in Gillingham, “Richard I,” 200.

²² Areyh Grabois, “Militia and Malitia: The Bernardine Vision of Chivalry,” in *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians*, ed. Michael Gervers (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), 49–56.

the immunity of certain classes of people and property from the depredations of war. Immune classes included clergy and pilgrims, peasants and the poor, merchants, orphans and women. In the assemblies of the Peace of God, bishops gathered their flocks to exact oaths from the local knights not to violate these immunities upon pain of excommunication. Occasionally, peasants and even some knights enrolled in peace militias that took the field to put down local warlords.²³ The Peace of God also spawned offshoots designed to institute other restrictions on war. The Truce of God prohibited fighting from evening on Wednesday to dawn on Monday and during religious holidays. Other regulations banned the use of certain weapons (e.g. crossbows) or the employment of certain types of soldiers (i.e. mercenaries) that were believed to be indiscriminate in their effects.

Although the popes and prelates of the time did not describe wars between Christians as in-group conflicts, that is precisely what they were trying to make them: limited and rule-bound competitions that preserved both the species and structure of the social hierarchy. Unfortunately for most of the inhabitants of Europe, the medieval Peace Movement was seldom very effective in limiting war. The peace militias that fought against local warlords were poorly trained and difficult to control, and their military record was spotty.²⁴ The clergy who led them were usually so eager to help the kings and dukes restore public authority—the “monopolies of violence” that had disintegrated with Charlemagne’s empire—that they did not extend their legislation to cover royal and ducal wars, nor did they make much of a fuss when allied princes broke the rules.²⁵ Perhaps more importantly, rare was the medieval ruler who took comfort in the thought of elaborate strictures circumscribing the crown’s ability to wage war, or of bands of armed peasants roaming the countryside. Since the feudal aristocracy were obliged to perform only a month or two of military service for their lords in any given year, the Truce of God proved particularly impractical. Kings and princes

²³ *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992); Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, 270–80.

²⁴ Thomas Head, “The Judgment of God: Andrew of Fleury’s Account of the Peace League of Bourges,” in Head and Landes, *Peace of God*, 219–38.

²⁵ Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 73–4; Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, 272.

could not get much done in a two-and-a-half day workweek. Brigands and pirates, for their part, rarely took vacations.

While even academics such as St. Thomas Aquinas realized that the Truce of God was a dead letter,²⁶ the Peace of God did achieve some notable results. The council that inaugurated the First Crusade and the great ecumenical church councils of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries constantly reiterated both the Peace and the Truce statutes,²⁷ but it was the Peace legislation that garnered more respect amongst the learned. Gratian's authoritative collection of canon law, the *Concord of Discordant Canons* or *Decretum* (c. 1140), implicitly rejected the Truce and ignored the bans on weapons, but it included some of the Peace of God's program.²⁸ Thomas Aquinas agreed with the basic concept of the immunity of noncombatants (although he did defend the Jews' right to kill noncombatants at the command of God).²⁹ In the late Middle Ages, Honoré Bonet dispensed with the Truce but upheld the prohibitions against imprisoning or ransoming a wide range of noncombatants, including old men, women, children, clergy, pilgrims and peasants.³⁰ In this way, the Peace of God helped to establish some of the intellectual foundations for the concept of collateral damage: a distinction between soldier and civilian, and the corresponding idea of the natural immunity of noncombatants and their possessions.³¹

By distinguishing soldier from civilian and simultaneously sanctioning the use of violence against the violent, the Peace Movement also helped to define a more active role for the Christian soldier. The

²⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964–76), 2a, 2ae, quaestio 40, article 4, p. 93.

²⁷ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, Volume 1 (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990): Lateran I.15; Lateran II.11, 12, 15, 18, 29; Lateran III.20–22, 27; Lateran IV (Holy Land Decrees); Lyons I, II.5; Lyons II, 1c. For the canons of Clermont, see Robert Somerville, *The Councils of Urban II, Volume I: Decreta Claromontensia, Annuario Historiae Conciliorum*, ed. W. Brandmüller and Remigius Bäumer, supplementum 1 (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972), pp. 142–50, nos. 1, 2, 33, 35. Cf. Urban's decrees 1, 5, 6 and 7 from the Lateran synod of 1097 in *Acta pontificum Romanorum inedita*, ed. J. v. Pfluck-Hartung (Tübingen: F. Fues, 1881–8), II, no. 203, pp. 167–8.

²⁸ Gratian, *Decretum, Corpus Iuris Canonici* I, ed. A. Friedberg (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1879), C. 17 q. 4 c. 29, C. 23 q. 8 c. 15 and C. 24 q. 3 cc. 22–5; Russell, *Just War*, 70–1.

²⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, 2ae, q. 105, a. 3.

³⁰ Honoré Bonet, *Tree of Battles*, trans. G. W. Coopland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1949), IV.50, 91–5 and 100.

³¹ Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, 273–4.

theologian St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) was the most eloquent proponent of the new ideal. The dominant ecclesiastical figure of his age, Bernard was instrumental in winning papal recognition for the recently created order of the Templars. In the 1130s, Bernard defended them in his letter, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*.³² Its central theme was the contrast between the greedy and ostentatious secular knights, who caused needless death and destruction, and the virtuous and ascetic Templars, who fought to defend Christendom. In Bernard's mind, there was little need for knights to assault fellow Christians, since God had offered them the chance to redeem themselves by fighting non-Christians. The Templars performed meritorious acts by defending the Holy Land and sacrificing their lives for their Christian brothers. Interestingly, these new Military Orders were to wear the standardized uniforms of monks and also to serve as the permanent, standing soldiery of the Christian settlements in the East. The ideal Christian soldier was now no longer one who simply refrained from attacking and pillaging fellow Christians,³³ but one who very conspicuously prevented others from doing so.

While Bernard was relatively unconcerned with damages done to non-Christians, his conception of the new knighthood does move us closer to the modern understanding of chivalry as defense of the weak. The fact that Bernard had to stress the Templar's asceticism so vehemently in his apology, however, shows how uncomfortable tensions remained between the religious and secular conceptions of the knightly virtues. While ecclesiastical writers mustered a host of carefully worded immunities designed to limit the destructive power of war, the soldiers of the High Middle Ages easily outmaneuvered them. The knights' disobedience manifested itself in their practices rather than in any theoretical challenge. The *milites* could not write op-ed pieces or 'Letters to the Editor' explaining how the laws of war were obsolete—indeed most of the knights could not write at all—but they could refuse to obey the academics' injunctions on the battlefield. What the clergy denounced as excessive, most knights continued to treat as essential, or at least collateral, damage.

The articulation of the ideals of chivalry was concurrent with the

³² Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, Cistercian Fathers Series 19, Works of Bernard of Clairvaux 7, trans. Conrad Greenia (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1977).

³³ Luke 3:14.

first expressions of the crusading spirit. In fact, both drew strength from a much wider movement, the so-called Gregorian Reform of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The reformers set their sights not just on the problem of knightly violence but on all perceived sources of disorder afflicting Christian society.³⁴ Having participated in the Peace Movement, the reformers expanded upon the ideal of the knight as a defender of the Church within Europe to create the concept of the crusader protecting Christendom from external threats. Hence, the reformers were the first to promise Christian soldiers remission of their sins in return for launching armed pilgrimages to the East. What did the ideology of reform and crusade have to say about the damages these campaigns were likely to cause? Would bloodshed be necessary to “liberate” the Holy Land?

The pope who gave his name to the Church reform movement did address the issue in the years leading up to the First Crusade. In 1074, Pope Gregory VII tried unsuccessfully to lead an army that was an odd hybrid of earlier peace militias and later crusading hosts. He was searching for new ways to address some rather threatening developments in his own backyard. Over the course of the preceding decades, Christian adventurers from Normandy had seized control of much of southern Italy, and in 1071 the Muslim Seljuk Turks had inflicted a catastrophic defeat on the Christian Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Manzikert (in modern Turkey). Italy seemed infested with brigands and all of Asia Minor in danger of falling into Muslim hands. Gregory therefore proposed an expedition that would quell both sources of disorder: he would first restore peace in Italy by subduing the rebellious (but Christian) Norman warlords of southern Italy, and then he would lead the same host east to rescue Byzantium from the advancing Turks.

Many people in western Europe were uncomfortable, however, with the idea of the pope leading armies against fellow Christians. The Middle Ages was not completely devoid of pacifism, and some critics felt that a papally-led offensive would stain the head of the Church with blood, thereby violating the papacy’s sacramental purity. Others felt that the monastic vows that Gregory had taken earlier in his life prevented him from participating in war.³⁵ The fact that

³⁴ Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, 270.

³⁵ Europe’s monasteries remained some of the last bastions of radical Christian pacifism. Monastic writers and the penitential literature indicate a deep and abid-

the Normans had defeated and captured one of Gregory's predecessors (Pope Leo IX) when he had launched a similar campaign in 1053 seemed to indicate God's disapproval of such expeditions. By the time Gregory ascended the papal throne, then, some within the reform party had already condemned Leo's actions.³⁶

Although the weight of opinion was heavily stacked against him, Gregory boldly answered the charges in much the same way Leo had. He argued that bloodshed was not his goal, but merely an unavoidable or collateral effect:

But we are not at pains to assemble this multitude of knights so that we may proceed to shedding the blood of Christians, but that they [the Normans] themselves, when they see a military force and fear to do battle, may the more readily be subdued to righteousness.³⁷

The context of Gregory's apology for the expedition suggests that his hope that he could achieve his objectives without causing massive destruction was not purely a rhetorical device. The belief that divine Grace could effectuate a conversion (*conversio*), a radical change in one's conduct and morals, dated back to the days of the early Church. The theologian Augustine, for example, had described in his *Confessions* how God had suddenly turned him towards the light.³⁸ By the High Middle Ages, belief in the power of conversion was widespread. We can see it in the various accounts of Pope Urban II's speech at Clermont in 1095, where he is said to have commanded pillagers and brigands to give up their evil habits and win eternal life in the defense of Christendom.³⁹ From Gregory's perspective, it was not completely irrational to hope that the Normans could be goaded into behaving like obedient Christians with a minimum of bloodshed.

ing suspicion that all warfare is tainted by sin; see Russell, *Just War*, 31–4 and Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, 266–8. In practice, however, the penitential punishments for killing in a "Just War" were frequently ignored; see Bernard Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, 153–4.

³⁶ Carl Erdmann, *Origin of the Idea of the Crusade*, trans. W. M. Baldwin and W. Goffart (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 121 ff.

³⁷ Gregory VII, *Register*, trans. H. E. J. Cowdrey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), I.46, p. 51.

³⁸ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1961).

³⁹ August C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1921), 33–40; Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095–1127*, trans. Frances Rita Ryan, ed. Harold S. Fink (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), I.3, pp. 65–7.

In addition to theological arguments, Gregory also had some historical precedent and military theory on his side. To counter the model of Civitate, he could cite the operation that Duke Godfrey of Tuscany had recently led to subdue another Norman adventurer in the same region. In 1067, Gregory had been the papacy's chancellor and helped to organize an offensive against Count Richard of Aversa, who was then threatening papal possessions south of Rome.⁴⁰ Duke Godfrey had rendezvoused with the papal forces and then marched to confront Richard near the great Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino (about 140 km southeast of Rome). After an eighteen-day standoff, Godfrey and Richard had reached a negotiated settlement: Godfrey agreed to return to Tuscany and Richard to withdraw from papal territory.⁴¹ This campaign thus provided some foundation for Gregory's expressed hope that military offensives—even those directed against fellow Christians—could be concluded with minimal losses. Gregory's archetype for intra-Christian warfare was also consonant with contemporary military theory. The Late Antique author Vegetius, whose *Epitoma rei militaris* was the most popular manual on war during the Middle Ages, frequently cautioned against risking battle. Vegetius argued that relatively bloodless strategies of maneuver and logistics were more certain to bring victory.⁴² His advice stands in stark contrast to that of modern theorists, most notably Clausewitz, who advised seeking enemies aggressively and forcing them to commit to a decisive battle.⁴³ Gregory's letter, then, displays

⁴⁰ Bonizo of Sutri. *Liber ad amicum*, ed. E. Dümmler, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Libelli de Lite I* (Hanover: Hahn, 1891), 599.

⁴¹ *Chronicon monasterii Casinensis*, ed. W. Wattenbach, *MGH SS* 7 (Hannover: Hahn, 1846), III.23 p. 714; *Annales Altahenses maiores*, ed. W. de Giesebrecht and E. L. B. von Oefele, *MGH SRG* [4] (Hannover: Hahn, 1891), pp. 72–3 (a. 1067); Amatus of Monte Cassino, *Historia Normannorum*, ed. V. de Bartholomeis, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 76 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1935), VI.9–10, pp. 270–2. There is a brief modern account in G. A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 195.

⁴² Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *Epitoma rei militaris*, ed. Leo F. Stelten (New York: P. Lang, 1990), esp. III.9, pp. 157–63.

⁴³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Knopf, 1993). Although the “battle-avoiding” nature of Vegetian strategy has surely been exaggerated, recent attempts to reject it altogether are not convincing. See Clifford J. Rogers, “The Vegetian ‘Science of War’ in the Middle Ages,” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 1 (2002): 1–19; Stephen Morillo, “Battle Seeking: The Contexts and Limits of Vegetian Strategy,” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 1 (2002): 21–41 and John Gillingham, “‘Up with Orthodoxy!’ In Defense of Vegetian Warfare,” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 2 (2003): 149–58.

some rather conventional medieval attitudes. While his faith in the power of God to prevent excessive destruction may seem to us rather naïve (as it did to many of his contemporaries), it does show some awareness of the dangers inherent in warfare.

Due to logistical difficulties and the failure of his allies to meet their commitments, Gregory's campaign of 1074 never got off the ground. Within three years, however, he and his supporters had become entangled in a bitter, revolutionary war with the dominant secular power of the age, the Holy Roman emperors. As this "Investiture Conflict" intensified, the papacy found it necessary to launch military campaigns against the emperor himself. When it did so, imperialist critics grew more vocal in denouncing the reformers as disturbers of the peace and wanton shedders of Christian blood.⁴⁴ Questions about a war's costs and legitimacy now demanded more sophisticated answers.

One of the most influential responses was contained in Bishop Anselm II of Lucca's *Collectio canonum* (c. 1085), the first legal collection in the Catholic tradition to address the issue of Christian warfare systematically.⁴⁵ In 1081, the imperialists had driven Anselm out of his diocese in Tuscany. While in exile, he took up the task of providing a legal and theological foundation for papal campaigns against the emperor. Anselm assembled Patristic materials (mostly the letters of St. Augustine and Pope Gregory the Great) that cited the harsh, out-group campaigns of the ancient Hebrews as examples of divinely sanctioned wars. Adding a distinctly Christian gloss to the epic history of the Jews, Anselm and his sources argued that campaigns directed against heretics and schismatics could also be acts of love and mercy. His reasoning here was actually not so different from one of America's justifications for its invasion of Iraq in 2003.

⁴⁴ I. S. Robinson, *Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Controversy: The Polemical Literature of the Late Eleventh Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), 95–100.

⁴⁵ The only modern edition of Anselm's collection [*Collectio canonum una cum Collectione minore*, ed. F. Thaner (1906–15); reprint, Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1965)], unfortunately fails to include the crucial thirteenth book, which deals with war. For a transcription of book XIII, see Edith Pasztor, "Lotta per le investiture e 'ius belli': la posizione di Anselmo di Lucca," in *Sant' Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le investiture: atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Mantova, 23–24–25 maggio 1986)*, ed. P. Golinelli (Bologna: Pàtron, 1987), 405–421. For a more critical, incipit-explicit edition, see Kathleen G. Cushing, *Papacy and Law in the Gregorian Revolution: The Canonistic Work of Anselm of Lucca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 193–200.

Sixteen centuries before Bush described Saddam Hussein as a “direct and growing threat,”⁴⁶ Augustine presented the violence of war as something that could prevent greater evils. To him, war could serve as both corrective and just punishment for sins: like a father disciplining a rebellious child, violence liberated the criminal from the crime. Sometimes the body had to be sacrificed to save the soul. In fact, to Anselm and his intellectual predecessors, some of the damages caused by war were not so much collateral as functional; they did God’s work by restraining sinners and punishing sins.

While these ideas were not new, Anselm’s systematic collection and arrangement of them was. Later canonists and theologians, including Gratian, used Anselm’s texts as the starting point for their own discussions about the rules and legitimacy of warfare. Moreover, Anselm and the other reformers went further than Augustine and the Church Fathers when they argued that operations launched in defense of the Church were not just licit but positively meritorious for all who took part. Popes had for centuries given assurances that those who died in just and holy wars would win the crown of martyrdom, but the high medieval reformers distinguished themselves by promising the remission of sins to those who merely participated.⁴⁷ Their attempts to refute imperialist critics and justify their campaigns against the emperor thus paved the way for one of the essential features of crusading, the papal indulgence.

If fighting for the papacy washed away crusaders’ sins, could the soldiers of Christ employ any tactics or practices they felt necessary? Some of the theologians expressed reservations about the pillaging of non-Christian property. They argued that plundering must never be the primary goal of a crusade (or any other military campaign), because these could be justified only as acts of mercy or self-defense. As long as their intentions were pure, however, the theologians did not prohibit soldiers from profiting.⁴⁸ If we can believe the various

⁴⁶ George W. Bush, Speech to the American Enterprise Institute, 26 February 2003: <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html>> (8 September 2004).

⁴⁷ Anselm of Lucca, *Liber contra Wibertum*, ed. E. Bernheim, *MGH Libelli de Lite I* (Hannover: Hahn, 1891), 517–28; Bonizo of Sutri, *Liber ad Amicum*, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Libelli de Lite I*, 568–620; I. S. Robinson, “Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ,” *History* 58 (1973): 169–92.

⁴⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a, 2ae, q. 66, a. 8 and 188, a. 3; Gratian, *Concord of Discordant Canons*, C. 23 q. 1 cc. 2 (para. 5) and 4–6.

accounts of the Council of Clermont, preachers of the crusade portrayed the East as the land of milk and honey, where the poor would become rich. Seized with the proper intention, then, crusading plunder was not collateral damage but just rewards.

If plundering could be licit and violence meritorious, were they absolutely necessary? One gets the impression from reading the accounts of the first crusades that few Christians entertained the hope that the Muslims would surrender peacefully. Unlike the Normans, the Muslims were not even nominally Christian (indeed, the chroniclers usually erroneously termed them pagans). Moreover, the ideology of religious pollution and purification prompted some of the Christian chroniclers to demand the execution of non-Christian civilians as necessary rather than collateral damage. The eyewitness chronicler Raymond of Aguilers, for example, depicted the “cleansing” of the holy places of Christ through massacre as the primary justification for the crusade.⁴⁹ In his mind, the crusaders had a duty not only to punish sins but also to purify the defiled promised land, much like the Hebrews had Jericho.

The actual practice of crusading could be exceptionally brutal, but the crusaders did not always behave like religious fanatics. To understand why, we have to read the chronicles very carefully. Many of the historical accounts of the First Crusade were written to prove that the crusaders had purified the Holy Land of infidels. The chroniclers were well aware of the criticisms Leo and Gregory had endured. Even as tens of thousands had answered the first call to crusade, the popes and emperors had continued their bitter struggle for the heart of Europe. When the crusaders stopped at Rome to pray in St. Peter’s basilica, they looked up to the rafters to find followers of the imperially appointed antipope throwing stones down on them.⁵⁰ Many of the chroniclers were therefore eager to show that God approved of the reformers’ military campaigns. In high medieval warfare, there was no more obvious sign of divine approval than the complete destruction of the enemy. But in their desire to serve the needs of reforming propaganda, medieval historians (and many of their modern

⁴⁹ Raymond d’Aguilers, *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*, ed. and trans. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), ch. XIV, pp. 127–8. Cf. Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicle of the First Crusade*, trans. Martha Evelyn McGinty (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), c. 29.

⁵⁰ Fulcher, *Chronicle*, c. 7.

counterparts) fell into the trap of considerably exaggerating the extent of the massacres of the First Crusade.⁵¹ The crusaders themselves had different priorities. Because crusading was prohibitively expensive, the soldiers usually attempted to enslave noncombatants rather than execute them. Hence, the shameless message of encouragement the crusaders passed through their own ranks before the Battle of Dorylaeum: "Stand fast all together, trusting in Christ and in the victory of the Holy Cross. Today, please God, you will all gain much booty."⁵² While such blatant materialism was theologically questionable, it was warmly received because many of the crusaders were at that point destitute. During the long march to Constantinople, many of them had lost their horses and spent all their money; they needed plunder and slaves merely to survive. This explains some of the palpable tension between the chroniclers, who wanted the sieges of enemy cities to end in apocalyptic bloodbaths, and the rank and file of the crusaders, who were more interested in taking spoils. Hence the historian Fulcher criticized his comrades for associating with "loose pagan women."⁵³

The crusaders' unfettered pragmatism also had a much darker side. While they spared captives when it suited them, the crusaders also expressed little concern with the damages they caused when moderation did not serve or directly contradicted their interests. At the town of Ma'arra in Syria, for example, the richer crusaders initially agreed on terms of surrender with the citizens, but some of the poorer crusaders, desperate for food and money, broke into the town during the night. Unable to enslave the citizens due to the surrender terms, the poorer crusaders tortured them to reveal the treasures they were rumored to be hiding. Practical considerations also drove the most infamous massacre of the Middle Ages. The aftermath of the crusaders' capture of Jerusalem in 1099 certainly marked a new nadir in relations between Christians and Muslims, but it would be misleading to portray it as an act of pure religious hatred. Many

⁵¹ David Hay, "Gender Bias and Religious Intolerance in Accounts of the 'Massacres' of the First Crusade", in *Tolerance and Intolerance: Social Conflict in the Age of Crusades*, ed. M. Gervers and J. Powell (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 3–10.

⁵² Anonymous, *The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, ed. and trans. Rosalind Hill (New York: Nelson, 1962), book 3, pp. 19–20.

⁵³ Hay, "Gender Bias," 9.

of the Muslim and Jewish inhabitants survived the initial breaching of the city's defences, despite the difficulty involved in distinguishing soldier from civilian in the chaos of the final assault. We know they survived because administrative records of their ransoms are extant, because the price of slaves dropped dramatically and because the chroniclers record that the crusaders charged the survivors with the task of burying the dead. Even at Jerusalem, then, hardheaded pragmatism could trump fanatical zeal.⁵⁴ When the crusaders learned that another enemy army was on its way, however, they ordered the cold-blooded execution of the remaining prisoners. This was the real atrocity at Jerusalem. Heinous as that order was, the crusaders believed it served a military purpose.

The bloodshed at Jerusalem shows that the legend of the fanatical crusader is not absolutely apocryphal. The model of the Hebrews, Christian conceptions of Providence and religious pollution, and the demands of reforming propaganda led those who proclaimed and recorded the crusades to see the death of non-Christians as essential to restoring the purity of the Holy Land. They did not dismiss the massacre at Jerusalem as collateral damage, but rather welcomed it as a sign of divine sanction. The war cry of the crusades was, after all, "Deus vult"—"God wills it". Yet, we need to recognize that the theorists were usually more bloodthirsty than the practitioners, and that fanaticism often existed more in the minds of the former than in the practices of the latter. Even at Jerusalem, ancient and cross-cultural pragmatic restraints continued to regulate the crusaders' treatment of noncombatants. The new "soldiers of Christ" saw Jewish and Muslim women and children more as plunder than as disease. They disposed of the conquered natives in whatever manner was most expeditious, whether that meant killing, enslaving, ransoming or simply ignoring them. Relations between combatants were similarly varied. Crusaders found it difficult to arrange truces and surrenders, and they sometimes took out their frustrations on their enemies, but mutual respect, even admiration, sometimes developed between the trenches. The anonymous *Gesta Francorum* praises the Turks for their skill in warfare.⁵⁵ While Usama ibn Munqidh describes

⁵⁴ Hay, "Gender Bias," 6–7.

⁵⁵ Anonymous, *The Deeds of the Franks*, book 3, p. 21.

the Franks as “animals,” he at least grants them the virtues of courage and fighting ability.⁵⁶ The interaction between Richard the Lionheart and Saladin became legendary for its cordiality and civility (even despite the odd massacre). These examples illustrate one of the oddest truisms of warfare: combatants are sometimes more ready to accept enemy combatants as part of their in-group than friendly civilians. The horrors of war can create in-groups with the most multi-cultural of memberships.

Similarly, our popular image of the chivalric knight is not completely false. Chivalric theory and customs did have some tangible effects on the treatment of captives and their property. Ransoming provided a viable alternative to slavery and facilitated the transition from out-group to in-group warfare within Latin Christendom. Religious chivalry distinguished more clearly between soldier and civilian and justified the creation of the first professional, uniformed, standing armies in western Europe since the fall of Rome. Bishops, canonists and theologians denounced pillaging as an illegitimate motive for wars between Christians and even against non-Christians. And a few combatants extended their chivalric brotherhood even to their enemies. While the clergy saw most of the destruction Europe was suffering as excessive, however, the knights tended to see it as essential or collateral. In the minds of the soldiers, ravaging served both military and social functions. Aristocratic privilege was one of the founding members of the cult of chivalry.

The medieval record tells us that when we in the modern world consider the moral problem of the damages caused by war, we are not completely naïve to invoke the chivalric knight and the fanatical crusader as bipolar moral exempla. Nevertheless, we should not reduce them to caricatures. This involves more than simply recognizing that crusaders could be pragmatic and knights brutal. It involves an awareness of the diversity of medieval opinions on whether soldiers should target civilians and the conditions under which such violence could be deemed acceptable. It also involves the realization that despite all the disagreements and denunciations, chivalry and

⁵⁶ Usamah ibn-Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades: The Memoirs of Usamah ibn-Munqidh*, trans. Philip K. Hitti (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), 161.

crusading were, from the outset, intimately connected by the medieval Peace Movement. The Christian theologian's solution to the problem of in-group violence was not to ban it altogether, after all, but to channel it towards the out-group. Like the rhetoric of George W. Bush and Saddam Hussein, the knight and the crusader were codependent.

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MEDIEVAL WARFARE AND THE VALUE OF A HUMAN LIFE

Kelly DeVries

It has always seemed to me illogical and inhumane that the people of our world have frequently decided matters of relatively little importance by sending a large number of their young males out to be killed. The fact that diplomatic negotiations, when used, have more often been made to increase alliances between parties who similarly are willing to send their young males to be killed seems to confirm this illogic and inhumanity. Recently a number of military historians have sought broadly chronological and geographical answers for this dilemma. Focusing almost entirely on culture, rather than technology, Victor Davis Hanson, John Keegan, Geoffrey Parker (to a lesser extent, as he still holds to his technological deterministic theses), Jeremy Black, and, most recently, John Lynn have crossed over the line once reserved for anthropologists and sociologists of trying to analyze why men have fought wars and why, in particular, the west has almost exclusively been the victor in these wars.¹ Using historical examples, these writers have at least surpassed their sociological and anthropological counterparts who all too frequently still rely on the “dark glass” or “rosy shades” belief of man being led to war by something outside of an innate proclivity to do so, *à la* Jared Diamond, who borrows just a little too much of the most wacky Montesquieuque explanations for warfare to be either sensible or scholarly comforting.²

On the other hand, their own reliance on culture to explain warfare and the west’s success in this warfare is dissatisfying, although preferable in my estimation to the technological superiority explanations

¹ References to these works are listed below.

² Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997). See also Harry Holbert Turney-High, *Primitive War: Its Practices and Concepts*, 2nd ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991); Lawrence H. Keeley, *War Before Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); and the various studies in R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead, *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1992).

proffered by so many military and non-military historians, most recently the very dreadful *Throwing Fire: A History of Projectile Technology*, by Alfred W. Crosby.³ Most specifically, at least for the premodern period, and in particular for my speciality, the Middle Ages, culture appears to be incomplete as a means of defining the history of warfare and its success. What I intend to do here is to supplement what is currently being written about the relationship of warfare and culture by adding another factor to the definition, the value of a human life.

First, let me review the literature, beginning with the works of one of the most popular military historians currently writing, but one who also serves as the doyen of the neo-conservatives, Victor Davis Hanson. John Lynn has done this very well in reviewing Hanson's work in general in the first chapter of his book discussed below; my purpose here, as with the other authors discussed below, is simply to focus on the place of the Middle Ages in their historical writings. Building on the thesis put forth earlier in his *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*, which looked specifically at Greek hoplite warfare and its success against the Persians,⁴ Hanson has recently written the chronologically and geographically broad *The Soul of Battle: From Ancient Times to the Present Day, How Three Great Liberators Vanquished Tyranny* (1999), which determines military leadership excellence as a "western way of warfare," and his even more chronologically and geographically broad *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* (2001), which determines tactical superiority as a "western way of warfare." Based on the above description, neither of these books seems to focus on culture, although I assure you that they do. What is more troubling for the medieval military historian is that neither focuses much on the Middle Ages. *The Soul of Battle* does not introduce any medieval general in its case studies, thus at least implying the author's agreement with the well-worn but expressly disproved notion that the Middle Ages produced no efficient general.⁵ What is even more of a problem with Hanson's

³ Alfred W. Crosby, *Throwing Fire: Projectile Technology Through History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For my assessment of this book see my upcoming review in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, although several other reviewers have pointed out similar problems to those I have with Crosby's premise, his use of evidence, and his conclusions.

⁴ Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁵ Hanson does not actually say this in his work, but the fact that he admires

notion of military leadership and the “western way of warfare,” as expressed in this book is that during the Middle Ages it was not the western military leaders who were the most efficient. Indeed, most medieval military historians would assign greatness to only four medieval generals, Attila, Charlemagne, Saladin, and Genghis Khan, with only Charlemagne considered to be “western.”⁶ *Culture and Carnage* contains more case studies, but only one of these is medieval, the Battle of Poitiers in 732. And the story of this battle, while traditionally seen as a victory for the Franks under Charles Martel against Muslims who had recently conquered the Iberian peninsula, is far from known, being based on relatively poor, wholly Frankish sources. Thus it is far from definitive as a clear victory of western forces over eastern ones, as the Franks failed to pursue their enemy and the Muslims still had time to bury their leader in full religious ritual and honor on the battlefield, and far from decisive, as it took the Franks the rest of Charles Martel’s reign and that of his son, Pepin II, and his grandson, Charlemagne, finally to push the Muslims behind the Pyrenees Mountains.⁷ Again, if Hanson had wished to find a perfect example of medieval tactical superiority there are many other examples. Take for instance the Battle of Hattin, fought in 1187, where a brilliant medieval general was able to use tactical acumen, the skill of his projectile troops, the weather, and the dearth of supplies, in this case water, to lure an enemy army into a valley trap between two of his forces, resulting in the almost complete annihilation of those forces and the capture of their leaders. The problem is that this leader was Saladin and thus not western, although he arguably fought a western style of warfare in this battle and in his bloodless capture of Jerusalem a short time later.⁸

several books that conclude that there was a lack of medieval military leadership—i.e. B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Meridian, 1991), and Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976)—has led me to the statement made in the text above.

⁶ Naturally the western military leadership of Belisarius, William the Conqueror, Edward I, Edward III, Henry V, and Joan of Arc must also be considered, but none of these leaders conquered nearly as much as those mentioned above, nor were their conquests always held for any length of time. Equally impressive non-western medieval military leaders include Bayezid I, Mehmed II, and Suleyman the Magnificent.

⁷ Bernard S. Bachrach’s description of this battle (*Early Carolingian Warfare: Prelude to Empire* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001], pp. 170–77) is the best description of the battle, far superior to that of Hanson.

⁸ For a recent synopsis of this battle see my “The Battle of Hattin, 1187: Beginning

Hanson's "western way of war" has been accepted almost completely without criticism by John Keegan, in *A History of Warfare*,⁹ and Geoffrey Parker, in *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*,¹⁰ but not by Jeremy Black or John A. Lynn. Black's focus is largely post-medieval, so I will not spend any time discussing his ideas here,¹¹ but John Lynn's *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture from Ancient Greece to Modern America* devotes an entire chapter to "Chivalry and Chevauchée: The Ideal, the Real and the Perfect in Medieval Warfare."¹² Of all these cultural studies of war, Lynn's is the finest for medieval warfare, perhaps because I assisted him with his research on this chapter, although I disagree with some of its parts—Lynn chose to follow Clifford J. Rogers' definition of Edward III's crossing of Normandy from the Cotentin peninsula to Crécy as a chevauchée rather than the campaign that I have described it as;¹³ however, he does prefer my version of what happened at the battle of Crécy over Rogers',¹⁴ so I suppose we are somewhat even. Lynn's medieval military culture is clearly a literate crowd, one that champions the reading and writing of chivalric discourses and tales, as much as participating in warfare and tournaments, what he calls "the perfected form of war." Here he is capably

of the End," *Medieval History Magazine* 5 (Jan 2004): 24–31. See also David Nicolle, *Hattin, 1187: Saladin's Greatest Victory* (London: Osprey, 1993), and Benjamin Z. Kedar, "The Battle of Hattin Reconsidered," in *The Horns of Hattin*, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 190–207. Saladin's own account of the battle is found in C. P. Melville and Malcolm Cameron Lyons, "Saladin's Hattin Letter," in *The Horns of Hattin*, 208–12. On Saladin's life and his military capabilities as a whole see Malcolm Cameron Lyons and D. E. P. Jackson, *Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁹ John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).

¹⁰ Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹¹ Jeremy Black's large collection of works on military history is well known. His rejection of the "western way of war" can be found in a number of these. See, for example, *War and the World: Military Power and the Fate of Continents, 1450–2000* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); *The Cambridge Illustrated Atlas of Warfare: Renaissance to Revolution, 1492–1792* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and *Western Warfare, 1775–1882* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

¹² John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture from Ancient Greece to Modern America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 73–109.

¹³ Clifford J. Rogers' view is put forward in his *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III, 1327–1360* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 238–64. My alternate view had appeared in Kelly DeVries, *Infantry Warfare in the Early Fourteenth Century: Discipline, Tactics, and Technology* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996), 155–58.

¹⁴ DeVries, *Infantry Warfare*, 158–75, and Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 264–72.

influenced by the work of Richard W. Kaeuper, who recently reiterated this thesis in his paper, "Literature as the Key to Chivalric Ideology," delivered as the *Journal of Medieval Military Lecture* annual lecture at the 39th International Congress of Medieval Studies at the University of Western Michigan in 2004.¹⁵ Lynn also holds to a strong ecclesiastical role in medieval warfare, both in trying to mitigate it—the Peace and Truce of God—and to encourage it—the Crusades. This, too, is the culture that defines medieval warfare, although to Lynn it sits at the end of his chapter, while I feel its prominence is more pronounced than chivalry.

I do not object to John Lynn's efforts here. I do think that culture played an important role in the means and motivations of medieval warfare, especially among the nobility and military leadership. And, as he also does not try to push the untenable position of western dominance so prevalent in the writings of Hanson and others, I certainly feel that this is a preferable work to theirs. But I wonder if it goes far enough to explain the way wars were carried out in medieval society at large, especially among those lower-class soldiers who did most of the fighting. For one thing, few medieval soldiers were able to participate in the kind of military culture Lynn champions. Most neither participated in tournaments nor could read or were the audience for chivalric manuals or literature; I have also concluded that by the late fourteenth century, if not earlier in some places, those who fought in tournaments and were influenced by chivalric works, fictitious or otherwise, were not the same ones who fought wars.¹⁶

Second, John Lynn focuses, as do most other authors, primarily on the offensive military struggles of the Middle Ages, and in particular the waging of offensive conflicts in the form of battles. In this he has been influenced by the importance placed on such conflicts by many medieval military historians, including, among others, Gustav Köhler, Sir Charles Oman, Hans Delbrück, Emil Daniels, Wilhelm

¹⁵ This will appear in a forthcoming issue of *The Journal of Medieval Military History*. The work that most influenced John Lynn is Kaeuper's excellent *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁶ My ideas on this will appear initially in an article, "Was There a Renaissance in Warfare? Intellectual Evolution and Technological Determinism, 1300–1560," forthcoming in the *Journal of Military History*, and will be developed further in *The Hundred Years Wars, 1302–1485* (forthcoming in the Longmans Modern Wars in Perspective Series).

Erben, Ferdinand Lot, Alfred Burne, and J. F. Verbruggen,¹⁷ when in fact early or high medieval battles were largely infrequent endeavors. Large medieval land battles were usually fought in desperation, only when one power was invading or trying to stem an invasion (e.g. Poitiers [mentioned above], Edington, the Dyle, Lechfeld, Stamford Bridge, Hastings, Manzikert, Northallerton, Arsuf, and Falkirk) or when leading or encountering rebellions (e.g. Cassel, the Elster, Brémule, Bourghérolde, Lincoln, Legnano, Parma, Benevento, Tagliacozzo, Lewes, Evesham, and Bouvines). On only very rare occasions would a leader fight more than one large battle—for example, Kings William the Conqueror and Henry I, and Emperors Henry IV and Frederick II—and then, it seems, only when their self-confidence overpowered their wisdom. As often as not, a leader flushed with victory in one battle would meet defeat in a following engagement, e.g. Harold Godwinson, Simon de Montfort, and William Wallace. Even the renowned warrior, Richard the Lionheart, was only involved in three pitched battles during his career, including all of those fought during the Third Crusade.¹⁸ Certainly some change in this came at the end of the Middle Ages, during the fighting of the Hundred Years War, the Swiss-Burgundian Wars, and the Wars of the Roses. This may be true in consideration of the rather unique Swiss-Burgundian Wars (4 battles in two years) and Wars of the Roses (fifteen battles

¹⁷ Gustav Köhler, *Die Entwicklung des Kriegswesens und der Kriegführung in der Ritterzeit von Mitte des 11. Jahrhunderts bis zu den Hussitenkriegen*, 3 vols. (Breslau: W. Köbner, 1886); Sir Charles Oman, *A History of the Art of War: The Middle Ages from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1898) and *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (1924; reprint, London: Greenhill Books, 1998); Hans Delbrück, *History of the Art of War Within the Framework of Political History*, vol. 3, *Medieval Warfare*, trans. W. J. Renfroe, Jr. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), originally *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen des Politischen Geschichte*, vol. 3, *Mittelalter*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: G. Stilke, 1923); Emil Daniels, *Geschichte des Kriegswesens*, vol. 2, *Das mittelalterliche Kriegswesen*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Göschen, 1927); Wilhelm Erben, *Kriegsgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1929); Ferdinand Lot, *L'art militaire et les armées au moyen âge en Europe et dans le proche orient*, 2 vols. (Paris: Payot, 1946); Alfred H. Burne, *The Crecy War: A Military History of the Hundred Years War from 1337 to the Peace of Bretigny, 1360* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955) and *The Agincourt War: A Military History of the Latter Part of the Hundred Years War from 1369 to 1453* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1956); and J. F. Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare in Western Europe during the Middle Ages (from the Eighth Century to 1340)*, trans. S. Willard and R. W. Southern (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996), originally *De krijgskunst in west-europa in de middeleeuwen (IX^e tot XIV^e eeuw)* (Brussels: Paleis de Academiën, 1954).

¹⁸ John Gillingham, "Richard I and the Science of War in the Middle Ages," in *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J. O. Prestwich*, ed. John Gillingham and J. C. Holt (Totowa: Barnes and Noble, 1984), 78–91.

in thirty years). However, the Hundred Years War, which gave history such battles as Sluys (1340), Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356), Agincourt (1415), Formigny (1450), and Castillon (1453), was really more a war of sieges; for example, the Burgundian leader, John the Fearless, certainly one of the greatest Hundred Years War leaders, never fought a single battle in that war, while Henry V and Joan of Arc only fought in one each—and Joan's participation in the battle of Patay was minimal at best.¹⁹ Moreover, at the same time as the Hundred Years War, the Ottoman Wars being fought across the continent involved almost no pitched battles and yet yielded some of the largest ground gains in history.²⁰ Simply put, medieval sieges were fought far more frequently than battles because medieval warfare was characterized more by the defensive than the offensive; and it was characterized more by the defensive because of the high value of human life placed on combatants and noncombatants.²¹

Now I know that this view goes against the traditions and myths that for so many centuries have described medieval warfare. The notion of blood-thirsty barbarians—Goths, Huns, Vikings, and Mongols, to use the four popular “Barbarian” cultures identified in the recent popular History Channel show—or ruthless nobles have permeated almost all narratives set in the Middle Ages, from *Idylls of the King* and *Ivanhoe* to *The Once and the Future King* and *Lord of the Rings*. But this is an erroneous image of medieval warfare, and while I will be able to do little more than outline my ideas here, for further development later, I wish to express my thesis firmly; medieval military leaders, by and large, placed a very high value on human life, and

¹⁹ On John the Fearless' generalship see Kelly DeVries, “John the Fearless' Way of War,” in *Reputation and Representation in Fifteenth Century Europe*, ed. Douglas L. Biggs, Sharon D. Michalove, and A. Compton Reeves (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 39–55; on Henry V see Christopher Allmand, *Henry V* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), and Desmond Seward, *Henry V as Warlord* (1987; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 2001); and on Joan of Arc see Kelly DeVries, *Joan of Arc: A Military Leader* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999).

²⁰ Two good general studies of the early Ottoman Empire are Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (New York: Praeger, 1973), and Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1650* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). On the military success of these early conquests see Stephen Turnbull, *The Ottoman Empire, 1326–1699* (London: Osprey, 2003).

²¹ See Jim Bradbury, *The Medieval Siege* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992); R. Rogers, *Latin Siege Warfare in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); and Bernard S. Bachrach, “Medieval Siege Warfare: A Reconnaissance,” *Journal of Military History* 58 (1994): 119–33.

this not only supplements the cultural definition that John Lynn uses to define medieval warfare, but also more than anything else determines the reasons why medieval wars were fought and why leaders led and soldiers fought in them.

Let me begin by establishing the fact that medieval soldiers were different from their ancient counterparts, and that this began very early in the Middle Ages. Even before many of the successes of the barbarian invaders had brought about any governmental or societal changes in the Roman Empire, a barbarization of the Roman armies had taken place. Vegetius and Ammianus Marcellinus decried it; Sidonius Apollinarius and Procopius accepted it.²² With the barbarization of the Roman army came the barbarization of military leadership—Aetius, Stilicho and others—and the ultimate barbarization of government. New legal codes introduced new societal statuses and values: *wergeld*, which quite literally reduced all humans to monetary worth.²³ The warrior in these legal systems was placed at the top, his value recognized and, consequently, protected by virtue of the impoverishment that would be suffered by the one who killed him. This was quite different from the Roman tradition and certainly led to an elitism developed by early medieval warriors, a machismo not earlier seen. In 470 Sidonius Apollinarius wrote with awe when he encountered Frankish warriors in a southern Gaulish urban setting:

Their swords hung from their shoulders on baldricks, and round their waists they wore a belt of fur adorned with bosses [. . .] In their right hands they held barbed lances and throwing-axes, and in their left shields, on which the light shone, white on the circuit and red on the boss, displaying both opulence and craftsmanship.²⁴

Invariably these warriors fought, but not as often as one would think. Battles described by Gregory of Tours, Paul the Deacon, Jordanes, Bede, and other “narrators of barbarian history”²⁵ were small affairs,

²² See Kelly DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1992), 8, 54–55. This is also indicated in Arthur Ferrill, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A Military Explanation* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), and Bernard S. Bachrach, “Procopius, Agathias and the Frankish Military,” *Speculum* 45 (1970): 435–441.

²³ Examples of *wergeld* sums can be found in *The Lombard Laws*, trans. Katherine Fischer Drew (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973), and *The Burgundian Code*, trans. Katherine Fischer Drew (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972).

²⁴ Translated in R. H. C. Davis, *A History of Medieval Europe: From Constantine to Saint Louis* (London: Longmans, 1970), 108–09.

²⁵ The term is Walter Goffaert’s, taken from his excellent study of these authors

involving few soldiers, especially after the initial conquests of Gaul and Italy had been accomplished. More time seems to have been spent avoiding open conflict and, when unavoidable, getting it over quickly with the least amount of damage and the least number of fatalities.²⁶ Old Norse sagas tell similar stories about the Scandinavians before and during the early Viking period.²⁷ When large battles did result, one also sees that they were fought to cause rout rather than death, with defeated soldiers often allowed their flight from the battlefield without pursuit. Already by the early Middle Ages narrative sources begin to list names and numbers killed in conflicts, obviously to indicate the prominent men who had been slain, but in doing so also indicating how few actually were killed because they *could* list the names of all who had died! For example, Einhard, Charlemagne's biographer, in recording the Battle of Roncevalles, mentions only three deaths, one of whom was the soon to be made famous Roland.²⁸

By the time of Charlemagne, but certainly begun by his father, Pepin II, and grandfather, Charles Martel, a new direction was followed: the establishment of an extremely large and dominating military force filled with well trained, well armed, and well provisioned professional soldiers. In this, despite the fact that it is unpopular to do so, I am convinced by the work of Bernard S. Bachrach, although I do not think that by building this force Charlemagne was attempting to recreate a Roman-style military force as Bachrach avers;²⁹

and their narrative chronicles, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

²⁶ See the numerous examples mentioned in Bernard S. Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organization, 481–751* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972).

²⁷ See, for example, David M. Wilson, *The Vikings and their Origins: Scandinavia in the First Millennium* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970), and Jesse Byock, *Feud in Icelandic Saga* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).

²⁸ In Einhard and Notker the Stammerer, *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, trans. L. Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), 64–65.

²⁹ This is most recently seen in Bachrach's *Early Carolingian Warfare*, but see also his numerous articles on Carolingian warfare including: "Military Organization in Aquitaine under the Early Carolingians," *Speculum* 49 (1974): 1–33; "Charlemagne's Cavalry: Myth and Reality," *Military Affairs* 47 (1983): 181–87; and "Charlemagne and the Carolingian General Staff," *Journal of Military History* 66 (2002): 313–58. Those opposing Bachrach's ideas include: John France, "The Military History of the Carolingian Period," *Revue Belge d'histoire militaire* 26 (1985): 81–100; "The Composition and Raising of the Armies of Charlemagne," *Journal of Medieval Military History* 1 (2002): 61–82 and J. F. Verbruggen, "L'armée et la stratégie de Charlemagne,"

indeed, the position of cavalry in Charlemagne's army denies that possibility in my estimation. Instead, I believe that Charlemagne built this force in part because he valued the lives of his soldiers. His goal was obviously for conquest, and the surest way of achieving this goal was to build up the numbers of his soldiers, to require them to be well armed and armored, to keep them well trained and well provisioned, and to provide them with good leadership. The result was that all of his conquests were successful and that the losses of his soldiers were minimal.

There is of course much more to be said about the early Middle Ages, the Carolingian period, Viking invasions, and high Middle Ages, but in this brief survey I want to mention three aspects of warfare that came out of this time that define the defensive priorities of medieval warfare in general, at least until the very end of the Middle Ages, and characterize the high value placed on human life during the Middle Ages: armor, fortifications, and military surgery.

Armor

The first of these was the development of defensive armaments for individual protection. Although personal defensive armaments, or armor for short, had been used since prehistoric times, as evidenced in cave paintings, it was not until the ancient period that Egyptian, Greek, Persian, and Roman forces began to acquire standardized metallic armor, yet even then this did not cover the entire body and was largely limited in use to elite and regular soldiers.³⁰ By the Carolingian period, this had begun to change. Charlemagne recognized quite early in his reign that his military conquests depended on the security of his soldiers, whose expertise at fighting wars could not be easily replaced.³¹ Consequently, they needed to be well armored.

in *Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, band 1, *Personlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. H. Beumann et al. (Dusseldorf: L. Schwann, 1965), 420–36; “L’art militaire dans l’empire carolingien (714–1000),” *Revue Belge d’histoire militaire* 23 (1979–80): 289–310, 393–412; “De krijgers van Karel de Grote,” *Genootschap voor geschied- en oudheidkunde te Vilvoorde* 5.2 (June 1999): 2–20; and “De oorlogen van Karel de Grote (768–814),” *Genootschap voor geschied- en oudheidkunde te Vilvoorde* 5.1 (Mar 1999): 2–22.

³⁰ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 50–55, and Arther Ferrill, *The Origins of War from the Stone Age to Alexander the Great* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 22.

³¹ This expertise is not contested by any of the Carolingian military historians.

The first extant law to state this policy was the *capitulare missorum* of 792/3, which demanded that all benefice and office holders in the Carolingian realm possess full armor and shield as well as a horse and offensive weaponry.³² This was followed in 802/3 by a capitulary again charging these nobles to have their own helmets and cuirasses (known to the Carolingians as *byrmies*).³³ Finally, in 805, the law was made even more specific. In this capitulary, Charlemagne required anyone of his empire who held twelve *mansi* of land to have his own armor and to serve as a horseman in his army; if he failed in his duty, both his land and his armor would be taken from him.³⁴ These *byrmies* were standardized coats of interlaced rings (chain mail), which were draped from the shoulders but also covered the thighs and upper arms, with bibs and coifs that could be attached by laces to the also required helmet.³⁵ Shields, too, were required of Carolingian soldiers.³⁶

Coats of mail such as the Carolingian *byrmies* were not unique to the Carolingian Empire. Indeed, the Romans had the skill to produce these types of iron armor but generally seem to have preferred the solid bronze breast plate. However, Charlemagne did seem to believe that his *byrmies* were unique enough to keep them out of the hands of his enemies. As early as 779, Charlemagne forbade the sale of this armor outside the realm; in 803, he added a declaration that soldiers were forbidden even to give it to a merchant, who might sell it to a potential enemy. It does appear, however, that certain amoral Frankish merchants still sold *byrmies* to Muslims, Bretons and Vikings.³⁷ It also appears that the Carolingian *byrmie* became the standard for all medieval armor until the very end of the Middle Ages, when during the fourteenth century plates began first to be attached to vulnerable parts of the coats of mail and then, in the mid to late fifteenth century, to be formed into complete metal suits.³⁸ While

³² Simon Coupland, "Carolingian Arms and Armor in the Ninth Century," *Viator* 21 (1990): 30.

³³ Coupland, 38–39.

³⁴ François Ganshof, *Frankish Institutions under Charlemagne*, trans. Bryce and Mary Lyon (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1968), 66, and Bernard S. Bachrach, "Military Organization in Aquitaine," *Speculum* 49 (1974): 29.

³⁵ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 60–62.

³⁶ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 59–60.

³⁷ Coupland, 39, and Ganshof, 66.

³⁸ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 63–72.

the coats of mail themselves changed in amount of body covered, until they were worn over the head and even on the hands and feet, the concept of defensive, life-saving protection did not change.

Yet, what may be perhaps more interesting in view of the thesis I am proposing is that this armor was not meant solely for the elite or cavalry soldier. While infantry during the Carolingian period were not always outfitted with body armor, although the Capitulary of Aachen, proclaimed in 802/3, did require them all to carry a shield,³⁹ nearly all soldiers, infantry or cavalry who participated on the Crusades in the Holy Land and elsewhere from 1096 until the end of the Middle Ages were outfitted with mail armor. In addition, by at least 1302 and the Battle of Courtrai, if not earlier, as evidenced in the contemporary Courtrai Chest and confirmed by contemporary documents and narrative sources, urban militias were also completely outfitted with armor.⁴⁰ Excavations of grave mounds at the battlefields of Visby (1361) and Towton (1461) suggest that this was similarly true of rural warriors.⁴¹

Never in military history have armies been so uniformly well armored; and this armor was effective. Those same excavations at Visby and Towton have shown how protective body armor in the Middle Ages was, as only wounds to the limbs and head were found, those to the head being, of course, the fatal ones.⁴² Experiments car-

³⁹ Coupland, 30.

⁴⁰ The best book on the battle of Courtrai remains J. F. Verbruggen, *De slag der gulden sporen: Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Vlaanderens vrijheidsoorlog, 1297–1305* (Antwerp: Standaard Boekhandel, 1952), which has been recently translated as *The Battle of the Golden Spurs: Courtrai, 11 July 1302*, ed. Kelly DeVries, trans. David Richard Ferguson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002). In this Verbruggen goes through the scenes on the Courtrai chest and how they relate to the battle. However, recently some have doubted the veracity of this artifact. See, for example, R. H. Marijnissen, *De "Chest of Courtrai": Een vervalsing van het pasticcio-type* (Brussels: Paleis de Academien, 1978), and Brian Gilmour and Ian Tyers, "Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent: Reassessment and Further Work: An Interim Report," in *Papers of the 'Medieval Europe Brugge 1997' Conference*, vol. 5, *Art and Symbolism in Medieval Europe* (Bruges: I. A. P. (Instituut voor het Archeologisch Patrimonium), 1997), 17–26. These have been countered decisively, in my estimation, in A. L. J. Van de Walle and R. Heughebaert, "De Chest of Courtrai: Een diplomatieke koffer anno 1302, zijn techniek en geheim," *Driemaandelijks tijdschrift voor industriële cultuur* 74 (2001): 1–72.

⁴¹ Bengt Thordemann, *Armour from the Battle of Wisby, 1361* (1939; reprint, Union City: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2001), and Veronica Fiorato, Anthea Boylston, and Christopher Knüsel, *Blood Red Roses: The Archaeology of a Mass Grave from the Battle of Towton, AD 1461* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2000).

⁴² Both of the books in fn. 41 have sections devoted to the wounds suffered by the excavated corpses, acknowledging the lack of torso wounds.

ried out by the Royal Armouries in England and elsewhere have confirmed how difficult it was to penetrate a moving target covered by mail or plate armor, especially if also wearing some heavy material under this armor; even thick felt would provide extra protection, while a quilted gambeson or leather garment, the more common, was ideal.⁴³

Fortifications

Moving from individual to societal protection, a second military technological development of the early Middle Ages that reflected the cultural value of human life was the fortification. Of course, medieval fortifications were not the first such societal protections in world history. Sydney Toy's *A History of Fortification from 3000 B.C. to A.D. 1700*, which grew out of his earlier study, *Castles: A Short History of Fortifications from 1600 B.C. to A.D. 1600*, established for every castellologist an incredibly large chronology for the study of fortifications.⁴⁴ Yet once one begins reading either of these chronologically broad tomes, one realizes that the pages devoted to fortifications built during the Middle Ages, both castles and city walls, constitute the majority of these or any similar studies.

Again, it is in the early Middle Ages that earth-and-wood fortifications began being used to protect not just individuals and individual families but also somewhat larger societies. These were especially important in the face of invading forces, such as the Vikings or Hungarians, especially as these invaders were often not numerous or serious enough to undertake the effort to attack or besiege such a

⁴³ About two years ago members of the Royal Armouries staff carried out a number of experiments using different medieval weapons against a free moving dummy to approximate human movement and dressed it in mail armor, varying the garments under the mail-leather, quilted gambeson, heavy, thick felt, etc. The armor in all cases and with all undergarments protected its user almost completely against all weapon attacks, hand-held, cast, and shot. These experiments have not yet been published. Other experiments have proven the weapons to be more successful, but these were against staid targets and without various layers of undergarments. See, for example, Peter N. Jones, "The Metallography and Relative Effectiveness of Arrowheads and Armor during the Middle Ages," *Materials Characterization* 29 (1992): 111–117.

⁴⁴ Sydney Toy, *Castles: A Short History of Fortifications from 1600 B.C. to A.D. 1600* (London: W. Heinemann, 1939), and *A History of Fortification from 3000 B.C. to A.D. 1700* (London: W. Heinemann, 1955).

fortress. Alfred the Great thus found in his earth-and-wood *burhs* safety from Vikings invading his kingdom,⁴⁵ while German and French Marcher lords secured their borders from similar invasions with similar fortifications.⁴⁶ Eventually these ring-work style of forts were replaced by the motte-and-bailey castles, which utilized a tall man-made hill placed within a ring-work to provide even greater protection for its inhabitants and potential refugees.⁴⁷

Yet, it was the Crusades that introduced European fortification builders and, even more importantly, fortification financiers to the styles, techniques, and uses of precipitous terrain as added defense that would become characteristics of all high and late medieval fortifications. While by the time of the First Crusade Europeans had already been constructing castles in stone, William the Conqueror's White Tower and Colchester Castle being two of the most famous of these structures,⁴⁸ the paucity of wood in the Middle East necessitated that all Crusader fortifications be constructed in stone. Additionally, as so few Crusaders remained in their captured "kingdoms" after their initial conquests, with perhaps as many as one-half to two-thirds of those still alive at the fall of Jerusalem—estimated to be fewer than 25,000—returning to Europe, and few newer Crusading recruits taking their place,⁴⁹ numerous fortifications needed to be built there. Unfortunately, scholars have not been able to put a definitive total on the number of castles that were built during the time of the Crusaders' Middle Eastern occupation. However, it is clear that the number lies above one hundred, if not two hundred.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. David Hill and Alexander R. Rumble (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996). Both Richard P. Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Longman, 1998), and John Peddie, *Alfred: Warrior King* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999), also discuss the *burhs* in the context of Alfred's defensive plans against these invaders/raiders.

⁴⁶ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 197–201.

⁴⁷ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 201–12. Numerous studies have been made on these fortifications, especially in England. For a bibliography of these works see Kelly DeVries, *A Cumulative Bibliography of Medieval Military History and Technology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), 837–42.

⁴⁸ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 220–25.

⁴⁹ On the numerical strength of the Crusaders who chose to remain in the Middle East see Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), 1: 336–41.

⁵⁰ See R. C. Smail, "Crusaders' Castles of the Twelfth Century," *Cambridge Historical Journal* 10 (1951): 35–38, and R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097–1193* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 204–07.

In deference to those built in Europe at the same time, Crusader castles built in the countryside used the harshness and inaccessibility of the Middle Eastern terrain to add to the defensibility of the structures. These castles were built on the summits of precipitous crags or next to steep ravines. At two places, Tyron and Habis, the Crusaders even fortified caves. Most castles had thick walls, usually more than five meters in width, faced with large stones, and intricate, well-defended entryways. They were also incredibly large, what I have called elsewhere "castle complexes," able to shelter and provide all of the necessities of life for a large number of people for a long time. Because their inhabitants anticipated long sieges that might last until reinforcements could arrive from Europe, the castles were provided with reservoirs for water supply and large cellars for food storage. For example, at the castle of Margat it is estimated that there were sufficient food and water supplies to feed a garrison of 1000 men for five years.⁵¹

It seems logical, although this logic can also be confirmed by empirical, archaeological, and written evidence, that soldiers returning from the Crusades were deeply impressed by the security provided by the fortifications there, for only at the end of the Crusades, from the middle of the thirteenth century on, were these castles even threatened by enemy troops. Indeed, most withstood almost all attempts to attack or besiege them, with many surrendering only when the numbers of defenders inside fell so low as to make abandonment more prudent than resistance.⁵² These returning soldiers then transferred this fortification construction knowledge to Europe where it influenced the building of castles and urban fortifications for the remainder of the Middle Ages, especially during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the so-called golden age of medieval fortifications.⁵³

Without going into further detail on the construction of castles and town walls throughout medieval Europe, let me end with two observations that I will state with far more simplicity than their

⁵¹ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 228; Smail, *Crusading Warfare*, 217–18; and T. S. R. Boase, *Castles and Churches of the Crusading Kingdom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 44–45.

⁵² See Hugh Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 98–119.

⁵³ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 235–43.

obvious complexity warrants. First, the construction of any medieval fortification was extremely expensive. Whether it was an earth-and-wood construction built using only the expense of forced labor, a large stone castle complex that served both as royal residence and fortification, or a town wall to extend around the urban area of even a small town, let alone a city the size of Bruges, Ghent, Milan, Florence, Naples, Paris, or Constantinople, such a construction was a major economic endeavor. Sometimes the cost of a medieval fortification is known; for example, the cost of Caernarvon Castle, built by Edward I in Wales at the end of the thirteenth century, is recorded as having cost the English king £20,000, with a total for all of his castle construction projects in Wales costing between £62,000 and £80,000.⁵⁴ At other times, the medieval military historian must recognize the expense implied from more indirect means, such as the punishment so often levied by conquering generals of having the urban fortifications of a defeated town pulled down, the expense of rebuilding a perceptible deterrent against disputes with the conqueror.⁵⁵

The second observation is less of an obvious one, because it goes against what most modern historians are led to believe about medieval fortifications. These buildings, with their straight, tall stone walls, did not fall easily. If those inside a fortification, whether a castle or a town, wanted to withstand an attacking army they generally did, and little could dissuade them from this determination. Attacking the walls of such fortresses was costly in terms of men and was generally only accomplished with the use of large numbers of artillery pieces and other siege machines, and generally also if there was no army friendly to the besieged that could bring relief. Thus time in these situations was of the essence, as the old saying goes; the army with time on its side usually won the siege. Time also allowed conquest more frequently by the old means of mining, starvation, negotiation, or treachery. This meant that almost all sieges took a very long time to accomplish, if they were accomplished at all: Rome took ten years to fall in 410; Château-Gaillard was besieged for more than a year in 1203–04; Calais took nearly the same amount of time

⁵⁴ On Edward I's castles in Wales see DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 244–49. Costs of these castles can be found on p. 248.

⁵⁵ See the examples in Kelly DeVries, "The Rebellions of the Southern Low Countries' Towns during the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," in *Power and the City in the Netherlandic World, 1000–2000*, ed. W. TeBrake and W. Kibler (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004 [forthcoming]).

in 1346–47; and Constantinople held out for almost a year in 1453; while Neuss did not fall after more than a year's siege in 1474–75.⁵⁶ Again, despite the contrary thought prevailing, gunpowder weaponry did not alter this situation decisively, as the siege of Neuss proved.⁵⁷ At times in the history of the world the value of protection, the value placed on the human life, both combatant and noncombatant, did not warrant the expense of fortification construction, but throughout the Middle Ages it did, sometimes in an almost incomprehensible way: Edward I's bankruptcy of the English treasury to build his Welsh castles has never been satisfactorily explained, for example, at least not for most medieval English historians.⁵⁸

*Military Surgery*⁵⁹

Finally, despite these attempts at protection, those fighting in medieval wars, as in all of history's military engagements, were sometimes wounded. Like armor and fortifications, military surgery had its ancient predecessors, quite good ones in fact. In particular, those ancient imperial and royal leaders who valued the lives of their soldiers furnished their military units with medical personnel who would accompany and take care of the troops.⁶⁰ By the time of the Roman Empire, military surgery had progressed so far that only the soldier who was most severely wounded would perish.⁶¹

⁵⁶ The best book on medieval sieges, which dates all of these sieges and many more lasting equally long is Bradbury, *The Medieval Siege*.

⁵⁷ This is dealt with at length and with more examples in Robert D. Smith and Kelly DeVries, *The Artillery of the Valois Dukes of Burgundy, 1363–1477* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005).

⁵⁸ A bibliography of works on Edward's castle-building in Wales is found in DeVries, *Cumulative Bibliography*, 887–89.

⁵⁹ Much of the following section originally appeared as Kelly DeVries, "Medieval Military Surgery," *Medieval History Magazine* 4 (Dec 2003): 18–25.

⁶⁰ A good general study of this can be found in Guido Majno, *The Healing Hand: Man and Wound in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975). For a more specific approach to ancient military surgery see Christine F. Salazar, *The Treatment of War Wounds in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000).

⁶¹ Roman military historians have often suggested that at the height of the Roman imperial army (first-second century A.D.), it was so costly to replace the training and experience of a soldier that it was imperative to preserve him for warfare. See, among others, G. R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), and Yann Le Bohec, *The Imperial Roman Army*, trans. Raphael Bate (London: Routledge, 1994).

The Byzantines retained the Roman military system and organization, including military surgeons. The military treatises of Emperor Maurice and Emperor Leo VI, the *Strategikon* and *Tactika* respectively, established that each unit of three to four hundred cavalry or infantry was to have two physicians (a general practitioner and a surgeon) and between eight and ten orderlies attached to it. As with the Romans, for the Byzantines the immediacy of military wound treatment and repair was most important and saved the most lives. To accomplish this, the orderlies worked as medics in a modern sense, carrying stretchers, performing first aid, and transporting wounded soldiers from the battlefield. Orderlies were even given financial incentives for the most wounded saved, and booty was also shared between the soldiers and medical personnel.⁶²

Greek and Roman medical and surgical texts continued to be used by Byzantine military surgeons. As the weapons had not changed, the wounds and other afflictions that plagued the troops continued to be the same. These ancient texts were supplemented in the seventh century by a surgery manual contained in the text, *Epitome*, of Paul of Aegina. So popular was this manual that it became the standard surgical text for military surgeons until the twelfth century.

It was not just in military engagements that wounded Byzantine soldiers were taken care of. Veterans who were disabled, wounded, or crippled were hospitalized and housed for life at government expense. Constantine established the first veterans' hospitals in Constantinople in the beginning of the fourth century, with Emperors Justin II and Alexius Comnenus I also founding crippled and long-term veteran hospitals.

As for what was happening in the former Western Roman Empire, unfortunately much erroneous scholarly thought persists about the Barbarian invaders. That they did not retain any Roman military organization and technology has largely been disproved, as has the idea that military surgery virtually disappeared.⁶³ Fortunately, the

⁶² Ian McCulloch, "Battlefield Medicine—The Middle Ages A.D. 500–1450," *Osprey Military Journal* 4.2 (2002): 14–17. On the Byzantine military system, including the aspects of military surgery and care for the wounded and aging veterans, see John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204* (London: UCL Press, 1999), and Warren Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army, 284–1081* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁶³ The best history for this and much of what follows is found in Pierre Huard and Mirko Drazen Grmek, *Mille ans de chirurgie en occident: V^e–XV^e siècles* (Paris: R. Dacosta, 1966).

notion that no evidence means decline and disappearance is no longer seen as valid.

This still leaves a gap in our knowledge. Early medieval military actions were not recorded with as much detail about the wounded as they were in Roman sources. Of much greater importance was the recording of the names of those killed in action rather than those saved. Nevertheless, that there were some important figures who had been wounded and then survived gives an indication that military surgery may have been practiced. Nor does it do much good to dwell on unknown "German tribal medicine" as some historians have done. Anthropological arguments of pharmacological treatment are largely unfounded; indeed, pharmacology generally indicates the educative skills of a craftsman.⁶⁴ Certainly there are several problems associated with practices and myths of humor inequities and poisons in the body that have their origins somewhere, but simply because there are no texts that explain ancient Barbarian pharmacological practices does not denote a lack of knowledge or skill.

Evidence of the continued importance and skills of military medical personnel comes from numerous sources. The accounts of Ammianus Marcellinus (c. 330–395) discuss many engagements between Romans and Barbarians where surgical personnel were present, although it is clear that their numbers and skills were not sufficient to keep up with the large numbers of wounds suffered in such warfare. Scythian surgeons in the Crimean region are known to have bandaged wounds. Medieval Norse medics used herbs and cauterization to staunch blood flow from wounds. And care and transportation from the battlefield of wounded soldiers continued. While it must be admitted that these are isolated accounts, they do show a continuity in military surgery with the Roman past, as well as the existence of an inherent Barbarian system of military surgery.⁶⁵

At the same time as the early medieval military surgeons were developing their skills, a new and different tradition of military medicine, seemingly uninfluenced by Roman practice, appeared among the lands dominated by Islam. Instead, Islamic military surgical techniques probably descended from Arab bedouin or merchant training

⁶⁴ On this see Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society in Later Medieval England* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997) and Nancy G. Sirasi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

⁶⁵ McCulloch, 15–16.

that evolved as Islamic armies came in contact with the Byzantine, Egyptian, and Persian armies they conquered. Like the myths that sprung up about Barbarian military surgery, it used to be thought that early Muslim armies also had no military surgical capabilities, although the love of learning brought about by a desire to read and follow the *Qur'an* must eventually have led to an understanding of the importance of surgery in preserving the lives of wounded soldiers. The value placed by Islamic teaching on hygiene and human life led to further interest in the treatment of wounds. There were of course some Qur'anic restrictions to surgery, but most of these concerned the treatment of women and the dissection of the dead.

As this study is meant to focus on western medieval military experience, I will not focus further on Islamic practice, except to suggest that surgeons working among Muslim armies developed different skills than did their European counterparts. This became especially evident during the Crusades when the two traditions were forced to co-exist together. This is unfortunate, because historians have put too much emphasis on comparative comments made about the two surgical traditions in the twelfth-century autobiography of Usama ibn Munqidh (1095–1188), an Arab living in the Crusader-occupied Holy Land. In an oft-cited passage Usama describes the experience of his uncle who sent a Syrian surgeon “to treat certain sick persons” among the Christians. However, at the point of successfully healing some of these, this surgeon was pushed aside by a Crusader surgeon whose crude techniques not only brought the death of his patients, but increased their pain quite markedly.⁶⁶

Usama's indignation towards European military surgical practices may be justified or it may be exaggerated. Indications are that as Islamic surgery had progressed, so too had European surgery. Certainly there was no lack of European wars before the Crusades, and in each of these there were naturally wounded soldiers who needed care. Still, one of the most important improvements in military medicine actually came in the Holy Land after the success of the First Crusade. Around 1110, the monastic military order known as the

⁶⁶ Usamah ibn-Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades: Memoirs of Usamah ibn Munqidh*, trans. Philip K. Hitti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 162. For a study of this passage see David C. Nicolle, “Wounds, Military Surgery and the Reality of Crusading Warfare: The Evidence of Usamah's Memoirs,” *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 5 (1993): 33–46.

Knights of St. John, or the Hospitallers, was established as an order concerned with the health of soldiers and pilgrims; only later did it evolve into a fighting organization, although one that never gave up its initial mission. The Hospitallers, both in the Holy Land and later when they were given first Cyprus, then Rhodes, and finally Malta as refuges, continued to provide military surgery and hospitalization for their knights and other soldiers. While the knights did not often provide medical service, choosing instead to devote themselves to military and administrative duties, the Hospitaller order would hire civilian physicians, surgeons, and orderlies to staff their hospitals and campaign positions.⁶⁷

While the Hospitallers were thriving in the Holy Land, a European school of surgery was founded in Salerno. Begun under the influences of Islamic and Byzantine occupation, the Salerno school remained in operation once the island of Sicily had been conquered by the Normans. The dominant influence in the rise of the school was Constantinus Africanus (c. 1015–1087), but it is the surgical manual of Roger of Salerno that is perhaps the most important work to come from the school. The *Chirurgia*, written in 1180, attributed to Roger of Salerno but probably written by his student, Gui of Arles, was enormously popular, surviving in more than twenty manuscripts in England and France alone, several of them illustrated, with more than fifteen translations being made before the sixteenth century. Roger's manual borrowed from numerous other, now lost, texts and was influenced by Byzantine and Islamic, as well as European, traditions of the time. While *Chirurgia* was not specifically meant for military surgeons, its influence must certainly have been felt.⁶⁸

Other surgical manuals followed, a number of which were written during the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries. These included volumes written by Gilbertus, Roger de Barone,

⁶⁷ There are several histories of the military monastic orders and several different histories of the Hospitaller order. One could do no better than to start with Helen Nicholson, *The Knights Hospitaller* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001) and Jonathan Riley-Smith, *Hospitallers: The History of the Order of St. John* (London: Hambledon Press, 1999). For the later history of the order see H. J. A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994). For a more complete bibliography of the order see DeVries, *Cumulative Bibliography*, 480–84.

⁶⁸ McCulloch, 16. See also Linda M. Paterson, "Military Surgery: Knights, Sergeants, and Raimon of Avignon's Version of the *Chirurgia* of Roger of Salerno (1180–1209)," in *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood II*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1988), 117–46.

Lanfranc, Arnald of Villanova, Anselm of Genoa, Guy de Vigevano, Jan Yperman, Bernard de Gordon, Jean Pitart, Jean de Prouville, Pierre Fromont, Henri de Mondeville, Guy de Chauliac, Thomas Scellinck, John of Arderne, and John de Gaddesden. Most of these surgeons were associated with royal or noble courts, and many also served as military surgeons.⁶⁹ In particular, Guy de Vigevano served as a surgeon with the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VI, in his early fourteenth-century campaigns in Italy,⁷⁰ and John of Arderne served as a military surgeon with King Edward III of England during the opening phase of the Hundred Years War.⁷¹ Others may not have served as battlefield surgeons but directed much of their surgical writings to wounds that might be suffered by soldiers. For example, in Book II of Henri de Mondeville's *Cirurgia*, the surgeon is instructed on how to treat wounds. The procedure suggested by Mondeville was to cleanse the wound, removing all detritus, especially "strange metals," and then to bandage the wound, to allow suppuration, or to suture it. Should the metal detritus prove to be too difficult to be removed by fingers or probes, the surgeon was instructed to use a crossbow to assist in its removal. This was done by cocking the crossbow string, attaching the string to the object to be removed, and then discharging the weapon. The detritus would be jerked out of the wound with such a speed that, hopefully, it might lessen any pain to the victim.⁷²

By the end of the Middle Ages battlefield surgery had reached its medieval peak. The constant warfare of the age demanded skilled medical personnel who could dress wounds of soldiers, and almost all surgeons of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had seen military action. The invention and proliferation of gunpowder weapons brought yet another technological innovation to the field of military science. Armor and fortifications tried to adapt to the weapons, and

⁶⁹ Huard and Grmek, 35–52.

⁷⁰ Huard and Grmek, 35–36.

⁷¹ Huard and Grmek, 51–52, and Jeremy J. Citrome, "Bodies that Splatter: Surgery, Chivalry, and the Body in the *Practica* of John Arderne," *Exemplaria* 13 (2001): 137–72.

⁷² Huard and Grmek, 40. Henri de Mondeville's treatise, written originally in Latin, is badly in need of a modern critical edition, although numerous translations exist, mostly into French or German. On the use of the crossbow as a surgical tool see Robert Ignatius Burns, "The Medieval Crossbow as Surgical Instrument: An Illustrated Case History," in *Essays on the History of Medicine*, ed. S. Jarcho (New York: Science History Publications, 1976), 64–70.

so too did the battlefield surgeons. Initially, military surgeons seem to have adopted a similar technique of wound repair as they had used so effectively in treating non-gunpowder wounds: cleansing the wound, removing the detritus, and then suppurating or suturing. However, some surgeons, especially those influenced by Islamic surgical practice, began to consider wounds caused by gunpowder weapons to be poisoned, and that the only means of eradicating that poison was cauterization. Life had grown cheap in the eyes of medieval leaders faced with so many wounds. Sometimes these wounds were not even cleansed nor the detritus removed from them before they were filled with boiling oil. Of course, few wounded soldiers could withstand the damage such a "cure" caused and many died. Ultimately, at the siege of Turin in 1536, the French military surgeon, Ambroise Paré, discovered that leaving gunshot wounds untreated was actually better than cauterization by hot oil, and his observations would lead to a halting of this procedure. Of course, he only discovered what many medieval military surgeons had long been practising: the effective and life-valuing repair of wounded soldiers on the battlefield or at a siege.⁷³

No doubt this idea of the value of a human life being a defining feature of medieval warfare needs to be developed more fully than I can do here. Let me merely suggest that changes were afoot in warfare and its relation to the value of human life by the end of the Middle Ages, especially during the last few decades of the fourteenth and the entire fifteenth centuries. The greatest cause of this was the constant warfare going on throughout Europe during this period. Added to this was the encounter of the western with the eastern armies of the Ottoman Turks whose leaders did not value human life in the same way as European generals and soldiers did. Witness the massacre of prisoners at the conclusion of the disastrous (for the west at least) Battle of Nicopolis in 1396 and the shock wave that sent throughout Europe, at least until such a massacre

⁷³ Kelly DeVries, "Military Surgical Practice and the Advent of Gunpowder Weaponry," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 7 (1990): 131–46. Ambroise Paré's initial observations are made in Ambroise Paré, *The Apologie and Treatise*, ed. and trans. G. Keynes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 138. He discusses more extensively his treatment for gunshot wounds in his later work, *Ten Books of Surgery with the Magazine of the Instruments Necessary for It*, ed. and trans. Robert White Linker and Nathan Womack (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), 1–47.

was duplicated by Henry V two decades later at Agincourt.⁷⁴ Then there was Joan of Arc, whose military superiority came from the fact that, as she believed she was on a mission from God, any soldier who died fighting with her would go to heaven. Consequently, she could be said to have lessened the value of her own soldiers—or at least worried less about their deaths in military conflict, as such would certainly bring their salvation—which allowed her to use their numerical advantage (at least 300 per cent) to gain victory over less numerous English forces in the Hundred Years War.⁷⁵ Finally, while not giving into any facet of the Military Revolution thesis, the inaccuracy of gunpowder weapons, the first military technology in which selecting and aiming at a target did not matter, meant the democratization of the battlefield, with the result that nobles and elite soldiers could not ensure their survival based on economic worth alone.⁷⁶ All of these changes, together with others that I cannot even mention in this short outline of later medieval warfare, weakened the value of human life on the battlefield and began the early modern military period. The medieval culture that defined warfare valued human life as no era before or after.

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⁷⁴ See Kelly DeVries, "The Effect of Killing the Christian Prisoners at the Battle of Nicopolis," in *Crusaders, Condottieri, and Cannon: Medieval Warfare in Societies Around the Mediterranean*, ed. L. J. Andrew Villalon and Donald Kagay (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), 157–72.

⁷⁵ See DeVries, *Joan of Arc*, where this thesis is introduced; it will be developed further in a forthcoming study specific to Joan's "use" and "value" of her troops.

⁷⁶ Although I disagree with much that is in this article, Clifford J. Rogers, "The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War," *Journal of Military History* 57 (1993): 241–78; reprinted in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. C. J. Rogers (Boulder: Westview, 1995), 55–94, does suggest the democratization of gunpowder weapons, although I differ markedly with his conclusions on what results from this democratization.

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RELIGIOUS CAMPAIGN OR WAR OF CONQUEST? MUSLIM VIEWS OF THE MOTIVES OF THE FIRST CRUSADE

Niall Christie¹

In this year [490/1096] there came a sequence of reports [telling] of the appearance of Frankish troops from the sea of Constantinople, the number of which was too great to be counted. News of that continued to arrive, and the people were disturbed to hear it and became alarmed as it spread.²

Thus the Damascene chronicler, Ibn al-Qalanisi (d. 555/1160), describes the beginning of the First Crusade in his *Dhayl Ta'rikh Dimashq* (Continuation of the History of Damascus). Ibn al-Qalanisi is one of the most important contemporary Muslim sources for the First Crusade, but in no part of his work does he explicitly state what prompted the arrival of the *ifranj* (Franks), as the Muslims called the warriors from western Europe.³ Consideration of the Franks' motives is also missing from most of the other contemporary sources from the period; only a handful of them suggest particular reasons for the arrival of the First Crusade, and the actual motives ascribed to the crusaders vary greatly. It will be the purpose of this article to examine the motives that are attributed to the crusaders by the sources contemporary to the First Crusade and its aftermath (490/1096–539/1144) and to attempt to explain the apparent confusion the sources show concerning this issue.

Sources

The number of Levantine Muslim authors who lived during this period is, sadly, very small. With regard to the topic under discussion

¹ The author would like to thank Professor Paul Cobb of the University of Notre Dame, who read this article and gave numerous helpful suggestions.

² Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, ed. Suhayl Zakkar (Damascus: Dar Hassan li'l-Tiba'a wa'l-Nashr, 1983), 218.

³ Although *ifranj* is the most common term used, Muslim writers also used other variants on the root consonants *f-r-n-j*, including *afranj*, *ifranja*, *afranja*, *firanj* and *faranj*.

here, the number of sources is even smaller. In addition to the work of Ibn al-Qalanisi cited above, useful information is also found in the *Ta'rikh Halab* (History of Aleppo) of Al-Azimi⁴ (483/1090–after 556/1161).

In addition to the city chronicles, one can also examine a number of works by the famous Syrian *amir*, Usama ibn Munqidh (488/1095–584/1188). Although he is best known today for his purported memoirs, the *Kitab al-I'tibar* (Book of Learning by Example),⁵ Usama was more famous during his own lifetime for his poetry. He also wrote a number of other works on poetry, rhetoric, *adab* (belles-lettres), history and religion, most of which are now lost; the most important surviving text, for the purpose of this discussion, is his *Lubab al-Adab* (Kernels of Culture).⁶

The literature from the period also includes the works of a number of poets, the most significant of whom to this discussion are the Syrian, Ibn al-Khayyat⁷ (d. 513–23/1120's), and an unnamed poet cited by the later Egyptian chronicler, Ibn Taghri Birdi⁸ (c. 812/1409 or 1410–874/1470).

Finally, the most significant judicial text for this period is a call to the *jihād* (holy war) by the Damascene jurisprudent, 'Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami (430 or 431/1039–499 or 500/1106). Al-Sulami was a teacher of philology and a scholar of Shafi'i jurisprudence at the Great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. He preached his call in the Mosque of Bayt Lahiya in the suburbs of Damascus during the years 498–9/1105 (the work was at least twelve sections long). He also

⁴ Al-Azimi, *Ta'rikh Halab*, ed. Ibrahim Za'rur (Damascus: n.p., 1984).

⁵ Usamah Ibn-Munqidh, *Usamah's Memoirs entitled Kitab al-I'tibar*, ed. Philip K. Hitti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930).

⁶ Usama ibn Munqidh, *Lubab al-Adab*, ed. Ahmad M. Shakir (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Salafiyya, 1987). On Usama, see Usamah Ibn-Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman & Warrior in the Period of the Crusades*, trans. Philip K. Hitti (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 3–21; *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition, s.v. "Munkidh"; Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 259–63; Robert Irwin, "Usamah ibn Munqidh: An Arab-Syrian Gentleman at the Time of the Crusades Reconsidered," in *The Crusades and their Sources: Essays Presented to Bernard Hamilton*, eds. John France and William G. Zajac (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 1998), 71–87; and Paul M. Cobb, *Usama ibn Munqidh: Warrior-Poet of the Age of the Crusades* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005).

⁷ Ibn al-Khayyat, *Diwan ibn al-Khayyat*, ed. Khalil Mardam Bey (Damascus: Matbu'at al-Majma' al-Ilmiyy al-'Arabi, 1958).

⁸ Ibn Taghri Birdi, *Al-Nujum al-Zahira fi Muluk Misr wa'l-Qahira*, ed. M. 'A. al-Q. Hatim (Cairo: Al-Mu'assasa al-Misriyya al-'Amma li'l-Ta'lif wa'l-Tarjama wa'l-Tiba'a wa'l-Nashr, 1963), 5: 151–52.

read the second part of his work again at the Great Mosque in Dhu'l-Qa'da of 498 (July to August, 1105).⁹ His text, entitled *Kiṭab al-Jihād* (The Book of the Holy War), called the Muslim inhabitants of the region to unite against the crusaders. However, it seems to have fallen on mostly deaf ears, at least in terms of those who could actually command military resistance to the Christian invaders.¹⁰

Only a partial manuscript of al-Sulami's work remains, which is currently kept in the Asad National Library in Damascus.¹¹ It is a remarkable document, containing both the text of al-Sulami's work and his own marginal notes, making its fragmentary nature all the more unfortunate. An edition of selected extracts from the manuscript has been made by Emmanuel Sivan.¹²

Muslim views of the causes of the First Crusade

The reasons for the Frankish crusade given by the Muslim sources vary widely. As noted above, Ibn al-Qalanisi does not give a reason. He merely begins his description of the Frankish invasions with the narrative quoted at the beginning of this article. Al-Azimi, on the other hand, does give the Franks a reason for invading:

The people of the coastal ports prevented Frankish and Byzantine pilgrims from crossing to Jerusalem. News of what happened spread from those who escaped to their countries, and [the Franks] prepared to invade [the Levant].¹³

⁹ Emmanuel Sivan, "La g n se de la contre-croisade: un trait  damasquin du d but du XII^e si cle," *Journal Asiatique*, 254 (1966): 204–5 and Nikita Eliss eff, "The Reaction of the Syrian Muslims after the Foundation of the First Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth Century Syria*, ed. Maya Shatzmiller (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1993), 163.

¹⁰ For more information on the impact of al-Sulami and those who followed him, see Sivan, "G n se," 204–6 and Hillenbrand, *Crusades*, 108–16.

¹¹ Al-Sulami, *Kiṭab al-Jihād*, unpublished ms., Asad Library, Damascus, formerly kept at the Zahiriyya in Damascus, under the numbers 4511 and 2357. The author gratefully acknowledges the contributions of Professor Carole Hillenbrand of the University of Edinburgh and Dr 'Ammar Amin of the Juma' al-Majid Center for Culture and Heritage in Dubai, who provided him with copies of the original manuscript.

¹² Extracts from the *Kiṭab al-Jihād* are translated and edited in Sivan, "G n se," 197–222. A full edition, translation and study of the text are currently being made by the author of this article. References below to Sivan's article refer to his study of al-Sulami's work or his Arabic edition thereof, rather than the French translation, while direct references to al-Sulami refer to the manuscript.

¹³ Al-Azimi, *Ta'rikh Halab*, 356.

Thus al-Azimi presents the Frankish attack as a direct response to the obstruction of Frankish and Byzantine pilgrims by the Muslims of the ports on the Levantine coast, with the implication (from the fact that not all escaped) being that some were killed. Thus he attributes the crusade to an act of revenge on the part of the Franks. As Carole Hillenbrand has noted, al-Azimi also perceives the Frankish invasion as being linked to Christian campaigns in Spain and North Africa, a theme that is also taken up by later chroniclers.¹⁴

Usama does not give a reason for the initial expedition made to the Levant by the Franks, but in *Lubab al-Adab* he does state what, in his opinion, motivated their continued activities in the area:

When the Franks (God forsake them) came out in the year 490 [1096–7], conquered Antioch and defeated the people of Syria, greed insinuated itself into them, and their innermost feelings told them of the riches of Baghdad and the country of the east. So they mobilized, gathered and set out, aiming for the country.¹⁵

Usama's text presents an ambiguity, for the Arabic expression *milk Baghdad*, here translated as "the riches of Baghdad," might also be read as *mulk Baghdad* (taking control of Baghdad). Either way, for Usama the motivation for continued Frankish activity in the Levant is greed, either for material goods or territory. Having made their initial gains in Syria, they now seek to increase their wealth or holdings, leading them to direct their efforts towards the lands of the east. Of course Usama is exaggerating, as the Franks never attempted to take Baghdad; however, by proposing the caliphal city as a possible target of Frankish aggression, Usama is attempting to emphasize the magnitude of the threat posed by the Franks.

Usama's view of the Franks' primary motivation being greed is one that is shared with writers from other cultures in the period. The Byzantine Emperor, Alexius Comnenus (r. 473/1081–512/1118), advised his son, John, to keep large reserves of money:

So that with these you may satisfy the greed of the nations, should these once more, as formerly, be on the move, gaping horribly and trying to devour, in their great numbers, this coveted city [Constantinople]. Do you not remember what happened to me? Will you not

¹⁴ Hillenbrand, *Crusades*, 51–54.

¹⁵ Usama, *Lubab*, 132.

ponder and keep in mind the recent commotion from the West,¹⁶ lest there arise a time of need which will chasten and humble the lofty dignity of New Rome and the majesty of its throne. So, my child, you must take care to lay up treasure which will clamp the jaws of the barbarians who breathe enmity against us.¹⁷

While the Byzantine use of “barbarian” conveyed the more general sense of “non-Greek,” here the text refers specifically to the inhabitants of western Europe. Thus one sees Usama’s perception of the Franks extended across the cultural border to the Byzantine Empire. On both sides of the divide greed is clearly being portrayed as a negative feature; in the Byzantine text the Franks are being depicted as nearly insatiable, hostile creatures. Greed would also be a negative quality in the eyes of the Muslim Usama. The *Qur’an*, a text that Usama knew by heart,¹⁸ includes frequent injunctions against materialism and avarice; for example, *sura* 9 (Repentance), the *sura* that incidentally also includes many injunctions to fight infidels and polytheists for a heavenly reward, states the following of the avaricious:

34. O ye who believe [. . .] there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the Way of God: announce unto them a most grievous penalty—

35. On the Day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks and their backs—“This is the (treasure) which ye buried for yourselves: taste ye, then, the (treasures) ye buried!”¹⁹

This is but one of several instances in the *Qur’an* where the desire to amass riches is sternly criticized. In this way, Usama is presenting the Franks as being guilty of a sin that will eventually lead them to the fires of Hell.

The Muslim poetry of the early crusading period might seem a strange source to examine for Muslim views of Frankish motives, as while most texts are potentially propagandistic, the particularly overt propagandistic nature of the poetry²⁰ would seem to deny the possibility

¹⁶ Here referring to the First Crusade.

¹⁷ Alexius Comnenus, quoted in Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 28.

¹⁸ Irwin, 73.

¹⁹ *The Holy Qur’an*, trans. and ed. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1975), 9: 34–35.

²⁰ On poetry as *jihad* propaganda in the early twelfth century, see Hadiyah Dajani-Shakeel, “Jihad in Twelfth-Century Arabic Poetry: A Moral and Religious Force

of it providing useful information, as it might be expected that factual accuracy and personal opinions would be subordinated to the poet's desire to provoke his listeners. However, occasional comments made by Muslim poets do give insight into their views of what motivated the Franks, or at least what they want their listeners to believe their views were. Ibn al-Khayyat states the following of the Franks:

How long [will this go on]? For the polytheists²¹ have swollen in a flood, of which the torrent [of the sea] is frightened by the extent.

Armies like mountains have stormed out of the land of *Ifranja*, to bring about our destruction.

They treat well whoever gives way to adversity, and are pleasant to whoever criticizes war.

.

The tribe of polytheism does not disapprove of evil-doing, and does not know any economy with injustice.

They do not prevent anyone from [taking part in] the killing, and do not spare any effort in destruction.²²

In this way, Ibn al-Khayyat presents the Franks as being motivated by the desire to destroy the Muslims, for no other reason than a simple desire to promote evil and injustice.

It is interesting that Ibn al-Khayyat also reveals knowledge of other details about the Franks. He comments that they are pleasant towards those who choose not to fight against them, a comment that may be intended as a criticism of some Muslim rulers. The leaders of the First Crusade had received embassies from a number of Muslim towns and fortresses,²³ the rulers of which had chosen to avert potential attacks on their holdings by advance negotiations. Soon after the establishment of the Latin states in the east, alliances were formed between Muslims and Franks against other Muslims, other Franks, or even both! Here Ibn al-Khayyat seems to be expressing his disapproval of such practices. The poet also seems to comment on the composition of the First Crusade; he states that the Franks "do not

to Counter the Crusades," *The Muslim World* 66 (1976): 96–113; Emmanuel Sivan, *l'Islam et la Croisade* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien Maisonneuve, 1968), 30, 46 and 59–73; and Hillenbrand, *Crusades*, 69–71, 102, 166, 179–80 and 240.

²¹ The Arabic *mushrikun* (polytheists), here used to refer to the Franks, was used of any group that worshipped more than one God. In this case, the Franks are polytheistic because they worship the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Ghost).

²² Ibn al-Khayyat, *Diwan Ibn al-Khayyat*, 184.

²³ Including Shayzar and Hama.

prevent anyone from [taking part in] the killing.” This may simply be a turn of phrase used to emphasize the bloodthirsty nature of the Franks, but it is tempting to see in Ibn al-Khayyat’s words a recognition of the large number of noncombatants who accompanied the crusading armies.²⁴ However, whether his statement is the result of coincidence or deliberate insight is impossible to determine.

Ibn al-Khayyat is not the only poet who expresses an opinion regarding the motives of the Franks. The anonymous poet quoted by Ibn Taghri Birdi presents the Frankish conquest as an attempt to spread Christianity, albeit a form of Christianity that is presented in the worst possible light:

How many a mosque have they made into a church, a cross set up in its *mihrab*.²⁵

For them pigs’ blood is suitable in [the former mosque], and the burning of *Qur’ans* as incense.²⁶

The anonymous poet’s presentation of the crusaders’ religion is deliberately intended to provoke his Muslim listeners. Not only have they turned mosques into churches and put the blood of pigs, impure animals, in them, but they have also set crosses up in the *mihrabs* of these mosques, the implication being that they will worship these as idols. Even worse, they have also burned copies of the *Qur’an*, the holy book containing the words of God. The poet’s depiction of these acts of hideous sacrilege would inspire revulsion in those who heard his recitation, possibly leading them to exert pressure on the authorities to oppose the crusaders. This is the reaction that he seems to be seeking when he later exhorts his listeners, “Say to those with insight, wherever they are, ‘Respond to God and [what] he imposes, respond!’”²⁷

Probably the earliest source for this period is the *Kitab al-Jihad* of ‘Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami who, as stated above, dictated his call to the *jihad* in 498–9/1105. Of all the contemporary Muslim writers of the period, al-Sulami has the most accurate knowledge of the purpose of the Franks who came to the east:

²⁴ On noncombatants in the armies of the First Crusade, see in particular Walter Porges, “The Clergy, the Poor, and Non-Combatants on the First Crusade,” *Speculum* 21 (1946): 1–23.

²⁵ The niche in the mosque wall that indicates the direction of Mecca, which is believed symbolically to signify the Prophet leading his community in prayer.

²⁶ Anonymous poet, quoted in Ibn Taghri Birdi, 5: 151–52.

²⁷ Anonymous poet, quoted in Ibn Taghri Birdi, 5: 152.

A number [of the enemy] pounced on the island of Sicily while [the Muslims] disputed and competed, and they conquered in the same way one city after another in al-Andalus [Muslim Spain]. When the reports confirmed for them that this country suffered from the disagreement of its masters and its rulers' being unaware of its deficiencies and needs, they confirmed their resolution to set out for it, and Jerusalem was their dearest wish.²⁸

They looked out from *al-Sham*,²⁹ on separated kingdoms, disunited hearts and differing views laced with hidden resentment, and with that their desires became stronger and extended to what they all saw. They did not stop, tireless in fighting the *jihad* against the Muslims. The Muslims were sluggish, avoiding fighting them and reluctant to engage in combat until [the enemy] conquered more than their greatest hopes had conceived of the country, and destroyed and humiliated many times the number of people that they had wished. Still now they are spreading further in their efforts, assiduous in seeking an increase [in their achievements].³⁰

Thus while al-Sulami agrees with Usama that the Franks are continuing to expand for reasons of material gain, in this case of territory, and also agrees with Ibn al-Khayyat that the Franks also seek to destroy Muslims, he also recognizes that the Franks are fighting a *jihad* against the Muslims, the most important objective of which was Jerusalem. In similar vein to al-Azimi, he also presents the Frankish invasion as a continuation of the European conquests of Sicily and parts of Muslim Spain. Naturally, al-Sulami is exaggerating the situation, in order to make the Franks seem more organized and dangerous and so to provoke his listeners into action, but his assessment of Frankish purposes is unusually accurate, compared to that of his contemporaries.

However, al-Sulami's description of Frankish motives goes even further, in that he regards them as not acting entirely on their own initiative. He notes that in response to both Muslim sinful acts and the fact that in the past they had ceased prosecuting regular campaigns against the infidel,³¹ God "dispersed [the Muslims'] unity, split up their togetherness, threw enmity and hatred between them and

²⁸ Sivan, "Génèse," 207, Sulami, f. 174 b.

²⁹ The term used by medieval Muslim writers to refer to the region roughly corresponding to the modern states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian autonomous areas and the edge of southeast Turkey.

³⁰ Sulami, "Génèse," 207, Sulami, f. 175 a.

³¹ For the development of the *jihad* up to and during the crusading period, see in particular Hillenbrand, *Crusades*, 89–255.

tempted their enemies [by which he means the Franks] to snatch their country from their grasp.”³² Thus al-Sulami presents the Franks as an instrument of divine justice; the Muslims have sinned in both committing evil deeds and neglecting obligations, and so the Franks have been sent to them as a punishment. According to al-Sulami, by sending the Franks and enabling them to conquer Muslim territory, God is taking the opportunity to warn His believers and see if they will take heed.³³ In this way the Franks become nothing more than an instrument in God’s hands, intended to allow Him to test His people and (He hopes) to bring them back to righteous behavior. This is not to deny the Franks free will, and hence culpability for their actions, but like all of God’s creations they can be encouraged in particular directions by God if the situation requires it.³⁴

These are not the only reasons for the Franks’ arrival. Al-Sulami also views the Frankish invasions as being part of a much greater divine plan:

We have heard in what we have heard of a sufficiently documented *hadith*³⁵ stating that the *Rum*³⁶ will conquer Jerusalem for a set period of time, and the Muslims will gather against them, drive them out of it, kill all except for a few of them, then pursue their scattered remnants to Constantinople, descend on it and conquer it. This is certain.³⁷

It should be noted that while al-Sulami states that the occupiers of Jerusalem are the *Rum* (Byzantines), during this period the Muslims intermittently confused them with the crusaders or viewed both groups as a single entity,³⁸ and in Muslim eyes the two groups were linked due to their shared religion.³⁹ Thus the prophecy would still hold

³² Sivan, “Génèse,” 207, Sulami, f. 174 b.

³³ Sivan, “Génèse,” 212–13, Sulami, ff. 180 b–181 a.

³⁴ The question of human free will in the face of divine omnipotence was one that had occupied Muslim religious scholars for centuries, and debate was ongoing in this period. The prevailing opinion at the time was, crudely stated, that humans were free to choose to act in a particular fashion, but that God was the one who created the acts carried out by humans and gave them the capacity to perform them. For more information, see Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Institutions*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 78–82.

³⁵ The *hadith* are stories of the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, used to supplement the *Qur’an* in Islamic law and theology.

³⁶ Byzantines.

³⁷ Sivan, “Génèse,” 211, Sulami, f. 180 a.

³⁸ Niall Christie, “Levantine Attitudes towards the Franks during the Early Crusades (490/1096–564/1169)” (Ph.D. diss., University of St Andrews, 1999), 64.

³⁹ Christie, “Levantine Attitudes,” 17–20.

the same appropriateness for al-Sulami's listeners. Christians had taken Jerusalem, so now it was time for the Muslims to reconquer it and then march on Constantinople. The latter was important in the Muslim consciousness, as it was the capital of the first major Christian power the Muslims came into contact with when they expanded out of the Arabian Peninsula during the first/seventh century. Despite repeated campaigns, the last of which was in 98–9/716–7, they failed to take the city, and this failure marked the beginning of the recession of the Muslim borders.⁴⁰ As such, Constantinople was a symbol of Christian power and opposition to Islam.⁴¹ In this way, al-Sulami makes the Franks the means by which a divinely-inspired prophecy will be fulfilled.

As will have by now become apparent, al-Sulami's presentation of Frankish motives includes a number of ideas that were also presented by later writers; his description of the Franks' desire for territorial gain can be found in Usama's work, his view that the Franks want to destroy Muslims is found in the poetry of Ibn al-Khayyat, his depiction of the crusade as a continuation of the Christian campaigns in Spain is repeated in the chronicle of al-Azimi, while the idea that the Franks are fighting for their faith is echoed in the anonymous poet's depiction of the Christianization of mosques. This is not to suggest that all of these writers were aware of the content of al-Sulami's treatise; indeed, it seems that al-Sulami's words had little impact on the wider Muslim Levant, as there is no direct evidence that his text circulated beyond the city of Damascus and its religious classes.⁴² What is more likely is that most of the information and ideas found in his text were also available to the other writers; the ideas were circulating throughout the region, but not all writers chose to incorporate all of these ideas in their texts. This situation begs the question as to why al-Sulami, of all the sources, is the only one who recognizes that the Franks were fighting their own version of the *jihad*, rather than simply pursuing an ordinary invasion. Without further information, two major interpretations spring to mind.

⁴⁰ Hillenbrand, *Crusades*, 93.

⁴¹ On Muslim views of the Byzantine Empire and Constantinople, see also Nadia Maria El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 2004).

⁴² On the history of the dictation of the text, see Sivan, "Génèse," 204–5 and Hillenbrand, *Crusades*, 108.

It is possible that al-Sulami was privy to information that was unavailable to his contemporaries, or simply drew conclusions that the others did not. Al-Sulami may have learned of the motivation behind the First Crusade from a prisoner of war or some other Frank with whom he had contact. Alternatively, he may have seen or heard of the crosses borne by the crusaders on their clothing, and from this assumed that Christianity had a holy war doctrine paralleling that of the Muslims; al-Sulami would, after all, have seen Christianity as an earlier, imperfect version of Islam.⁴³

A second, more risky suggestion is that al-Sulami was the only writer willing to acknowledge that the Christians were pursuing a holy war. It is always dangerous to use absence of information as evidence for "conspiracy theories," and this author does not mean to suggest that the other writers made a joint decision to omit this piece of information, but it would be understandable that Muslim writers might not wish to acknowledge that the crusaders could claim any form of moral justifiability for their actions, even under the dictates of the Franks' Christian faith. To acknowledge the existence of a formal, Christian *jihad* doctrine would imply that on some level, what the crusaders were doing was, in some way, legitimate; the Franks would cease to be an evil, idolatrous or avaricious enemy and would become instead merely misguided, complicating the clear black and white, "them-against-us" mentality that the sources hoped to provoke in their listeners or readers. In this way it is understandable that when he depicts Frankish Christianity, the anonymous poet presents the listener with a sacrilegious, idolatrous faith that involves the use of pigs' blood in places of worship; there is no hint that the Franks' religion might have anything attractive or acceptable associated with it. In this way propagandistic purposes win out over presentation of accurate facts.

In the absence of definite evidence, such assertions are impossible to prove, but it is noteworthy that it was a century before others recorded that the Franks were fighting a *jihad*. In the early thirteenth century, the Mosuli historian, Ibn al-Athir (555/1160–630/1233), wrote his great universal history, *al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh* (Complete History). As Hillenbrand has noted, when it came to the First Crusade, he

⁴³ The author is indebted to Professor Paul Hyams of Cornell University and Professor Deborah Gerish of Emporia State University for their thoughts on this matter.

also regarded the arrival of the Franks as a continuation of their activities in Spain, Sicily and North Africa.⁴⁴ He then presents two different accounts, one after the other, each suggesting different reasons for the arrival of the crusaders. In the first account, he gives the story of a message sent by “their king, Baldwin”⁴⁵ to Roger I of Sicily (483/1091–494/1101):

[Baldwin] sent [a letter] to Roger, saying, “I have gathered a great force and am coming to you, and will travel from your territory to North Africa. I will conquer it and will be a neighbor to you.”

Roger gathered his followers and consulted with them about that. They said: “By the truth of the Gospel, this is excellent for both us and them. The country will become a Christian place.” And [Roger] raised his leg and released a great fart and said: “By the truth of my religion, this is better than your words!”

Roger goes on to explain that if he agrees to Baldwin’s suggestion, he will then have to support Baldwin’s attack. Roger also claims that if Baldwin’s forces succeed, he will lose revenue because goods from Sicily will pass to North Africa; on the other hand, if the attack fails, Baldwin will blame him and relations between the two will sour. Roger therefore sends the following message to Baldwin:

If you are determined to fight the *jihad* against the Muslims, the better [means to do] that would be to conquer Jerusalem. Free it from their hands and you will gain glory. As for North Africa, there are oaths of allegiance and treaties between myself and its people.⁴⁶

In this way Ibn al-Athir acknowledges that the Franks were fighting a *jihad* against the Muslims, although the decision to attack Jerusalem becomes a result of political maneuvering, rather than springing from any particular piety on the part of the Franks, and Roger persuades Baldwin to attack it by offering him glory, rather than a religious reward. This denial of any form of religious ambition behind the Franks’ activities is but one of several ways in which Ibn al-Athir shows the Franks to be inferior to the Muslims. The Mosuli chronicler also depicts Roger as a crude, flatulent boor who is unwilling to spend his resources to support his coreligionist’s efforts and clearly

⁴⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kāmil fi’l-Ta’rikh*, ed. Carolus J. Tornberg (1864, reprint Beirut: Dar Sader and Dar Beyrouth, 1966), 10: 272 and Hillenbrand, *Crusades*, 52.

⁴⁵ Presumably Baldwin of Boulogne, who ruled as Baldwin I of Jerusalem from 494/1100 to 511/1118.

⁴⁶ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kāmil fi’l-Ta’rikh*, 10: 272–3.

places a greater value on material gain. Ibn al-Athir does not comment on the veracity or otherwise of the “oaths of allegiance and treaties” between Roger and the inhabitants of North Africa.

In this way it seems that Ibn al-Athir acknowledges that the Franks at least claim that they are fighting a *jihad*, but his account is clearly slanted to depict the Franks as decidedly second-rate holy warriors; they are crude, place greater value on material gain and internal politicking, and promotion of the religion is only incidental to their territorial ambitions. This is a contrast to the *jihad* called for by al-Sulami, who discusses at great length the obligation of the Muslims to aid each other⁴⁷ and urges political authorities, whom he sees as neglecting rather than debasing the *jihad*,⁴⁸ to “fight the *jihad* with your wealth and yourselves.”⁴⁹ In line with standard *jihad* doctrine, he also urges his listeners to place greater value on the *jihad al-akbar* (greater *jihad*), the struggle against one’s own inner sinfulness, rather than the *jihad al-asghar* (lesser *jihad*), the struggle against external enemies:

Give precedence to *jihad* of yourselves over *jihad* against your enemies, for if yourselves are among your enemies, prevent them from being disobedient to their Creator (who is praised). You will succeed in your hopes of victory over them. Make right what is between you and your Creator, and what is wrong with your [current] state of being will be made right for you, and your enmity will be reconciled. Tear out your disobedience to God (who is praised), resolute, and follow your tearing [it] out with doing what is right in what you start afresh. It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you rulers over the world.⁵⁰

This return to pious practice that al-Sulami advocates is a far cry from the merely incidental religious interest of the Franks depicted by Ibn al-Athir. In this way the latter accepts the existence of a Frankish *jihad*, but is careful to depict it as a poor shadow of the Muslim one, something that would seem to support the second of the reasons proposed above for the apparent Muslim ignorance regarding the Frankish *jihad*, the desire to avoid acknowledging even

⁴⁷ Sivan, “Génèse,” 208–9, Sulami, ff. 175 b–177 a.

⁴⁸ Sivan, “Génèse,” 209–10, Sulami, ff. 177 a and b.

⁴⁹ Sivan, “Génèse,” 210, Sulami, f. 177 b. Al-Sulami is quoting an injunction found in the *Qur’an*, 4:95, 9:81, 9:88 and 9:111.

⁵⁰ Sivan, “Génèse,” 211, Sulami, f. 180 b.

the remotest possibility of a moral or religious justification for the Franks' activities. However, Ibn al-Athir is writing much later than al-Sulami, and Muslim-Frankish interaction over the interim is likely to have made more Muslims aware of the Christians' crusade doctrine.

Ibn al-Athir's second account suggests a different origin for the First Crusade:

It is said that the 'Alid rulers of Egypt, when they saw the strength of the Seljukid state, its power and conquest of the country of Syria up to Gaza, and [that] there was no other sovereign power remaining between [the Seljuks] and Egypt to hinder them, and the entry of Atsiz⁵¹ into Egypt and his surrounding of it, they were afraid. So they sent [a letter] to the Franks, calling them to set out for Syria and take possession of it, and be between them and the Muslims.⁵²

In this second account Ibn al-Athir takes the opportunity to disparage the Shi'i Fatimid caliphs of Egypt, to whom he, as a Sunni Muslim, refers as "the 'Alid rulers of Egypt." To Ibn al-Athir, the Fatimids' doctrine was heretical and their claims to the caliphate ridiculous; indeed, he makes it clear in his account that he does not even regard them as Muslims. Therefore, he depicts them as weak in comparison to the Sunni Seljuks and inclined to turn to non-Muslims for aid. While the Fatimids may well initially have welcomed the Franks as a potential ally against the Seljuks,⁵³ Ibn al-Athir's account goes too far in ascribing the arrival of the crusade to their machinations. It is apparent that as in his first account, factual accuracy is subordinated to propagandistic motives.

Conclusion

In summing up one can see that it is very difficult, primarily due to the limitations of the sources, to establish developments in what the Muslim writers of the early sixth/twelfth century saw as the causes of the First Crusade. In constructing a chronology one is forced temporarily to leave aside Ibn Taghri Birdi's anonymous poet, so the first datable source to record what its author saw as the motives of the Franks is al-Sulami, who suggested a range of objec-

⁵¹ A Turcoman chieftain who invaded Fatimid territory in the 460s/1070s.

⁵² Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kāmil fī'l-Ta'rikh*, 10: 273.

⁵³ Hillenbrand, *Crusades*, 44–47.

tives including the continuation of a campaign of conquest begun in Spain and the expansion of Frankish territory in the Levant, the defeat and destruction of Muslims and, most importantly, the pursuit of a *jihad* against them. It is clear that some of al-Sulami's views may have influenced Ibn al-Khayyat, al-Azimi and Usama ibn Munqidh. Given that al-Sulami must have been aware that the Franks were Christians and depicts them as fighting for their faith, one might also see the anonymous poet's description of the Franks' promotion of Christianity as being a dramatic elaboration of al-Sulami's insights. It is important to emphasize that it is unlikely that al-Sulami directly influenced the other writers; it is far more probable that the motives he cites were circulating in the society in which he was writing.

Al-Sulami's most remarkable insight, the explicit recognition that the Franks were fighting a holy war, seems to have been mostly ignored. The problems associated with Ibn al-Athir's account help explain why this might have been the case; to acknowledge a Frankish *jihad* might hint at a legitimacy in their actions that would make it difficult to designate them as a clear enemy. Besides, for the mostly fragmented Muslim political authorities at the time the issue was not why the crusaders had come but how they were going to deal with them.

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PART TWO

BLOODY REALITIES:
WAR IN PRACTICE

THINKING ABOUT CRUSADER STRATEGY

John France

The focus of recent writing on the crusades has been an understanding of what the crusade really was, how the movement arose, the *mentalités* that made it possible, and an exploration of the range of crusading. This has resulted in a sharp division amongst historians between, on the one hand, “pluralists,” mainly Anglo-American, who argue that the crusade was essentially an arm of papal policy and others, mainly continental, who argue for an organic connection between Jerusalem and the movement. There exists a truly vigorous debate and a vast range of writing.¹

By contrast historians interested in military matters have long depended upon Smail’s classic work as a general study of crusading warfare in the twelfth century. They have been able to do this because it is such an excellent book and to a remarkable degree has stood the test of time. Smail’s book has been supplemented by Marshall for the thirteenth century while Rogers has produced a study of siege warfare that has added a vital perspective.² In addition to these volumes, the First Crusade has been examined as a military campaign, and with regard to the Third Crusade, there is

¹ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What were the Crusades?* 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003) is the key pluralist text, while Hans Eberhard Meyer, *The Crusades*, trans. John Gillingham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) represents the alternative viewpoint. A critique of pluralism is provided by Christopher J. Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1998). For an interesting survey of the literature see Jonathan Riley-Smith, “Erdmann and the Historiography of the Crusades, 1935–95,” in *La primera cruzada novecientos años después: el Concilio de Clermont y los orígenes del movimiento cruzado* ed. Luis García-Guijarro Ramos (Madrid: Amat Bellés, 1997), 17–32. For a distinguished study of the crusader mentality and its origins see Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). On the geographical extension of our understanding of crusading see Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades* (London: Penguin, 1980), while for an exploration of the phenomenon beyond the usually accepted time range Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades. From Lyons to the Alcazar 1274–1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

² R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare 1097–1193* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956); Christopher Marshall, *Warfare in the Latin East 1192–1291* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Randall Rogers, *Latin Siege Warfare in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

a debate about Richard I as a soldier, though that is not purely centered on crusading. The Fifth Crusade has been the subject of a very notable study that brings out the military aspects of the campaign very well indeed.³ In addition there have been several excellent recent studies of particular aspects of the military history of the crusades.⁴ However, reconsiderations of wider questions of crusading military activity have been relatively few, although there is now an excellent modern introduction to the fortifications of the settlers in the Holy Land that contextualises these remarkable structures.⁵ Despite all this activity some specific questions remain, notably that of strategy.

³ The military history of the First Crusade has been studied by John France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). James M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213–1221* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1986). John Gillingham is the chief authority on Richard, especially in his “Richard I and the Science of War in the Middle Ages,” in *War and Government in the Middle Ages*, eds. John Gillingham and J. C. Holt (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1984) and *Richard Coeur de Lion: Kingship, Chivalry and War in the Twelfth Century* (London: Hambledon, 1994). For another view of Richard see Ralph V. Turner and Richard R. Heiser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart Ruler of the Angevin Empire* (Harlow: Longman, 2000). For a vigorous debate on Richard as a soldier see the opposing views of J. O. Prestwich, “Richard Coeur de Lion: rex bellicosus,” in *Riccardo Cuor di Leone nella storia e nella leggenda* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1981) and John Gillingham, “Conquering Kings: some Twelfth Century Reflections on Henry II and Richard I,” in *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages: Essays presented to Karl Leyser*, ed. Timothy Reuter (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), 163–78.

⁴ Notable particular studies are: Benjamin Z. Kedar, “The Battle of Hattin Revisited,” in *The Horns of Hattin*, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar (London: Variorum, 1992), 190–207; C. R. Bowlus, “Tactical and Strategic Weaknesses of Horse-archers on the Eve of the First Crusade,” in *Autour de la première croisade*, ed. Michel Balard (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996), 159–66; Thomas Asbridge, “The significance and causes of the battle of the Field of Blood,” *Journal of Medieval History* 23 (1997): 301–16; Y. Harari, “The Military Role of the Frankish Turcopoles,” *Mediterranean History Review* 12 (1997): 75–116; Malcolm Barber, “Frontier Warfare in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,” in *The Crusades and their Sources: Essays presented to Bernard Hamilton*, ed. John France and William G. Zajac (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 9–22; John France, “Crusading Warfare and its Adaptation to Eastern Conditions in the Twelfth Century,” *Mediterranean History Review* 15 (2000), 49–66; Bernard Hamilton, *The Leper King and his Heirs: Baldwin IV and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); John H. Pryor, “The Venetian Fleet for the Fourth Crusade and the Diversion of the Crusade to Constantinople,” in *The Experience of Crusading*, ed. Marcus Bull et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 1: 103–126; Thomas F. Madden, *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2003). On weapons and military equipment the authority is David Nicolle, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era 1050–1350* (New York: Kraus International, 1988), but his interests extend far wider as is evident in a recent collection of essays, *Warriors and their Weapons around the Time of the Crusades* (Aldershot: Variorum, 2002).

⁵ A rather wider work is France, “Crusading Warfare.” It is disappointing that

It is interesting that none of the chapter headings in Smail or Marshall mentions the word “strategy,” though Smail, in his second chapter, “Warfare and Policy in Latin Syria,” certainly approached the problem but never developed his analysis, which is, in any case, very “state-centered.” In fact there have been recent discussions of crusader strategy. John Gillingham believes that Richard the Lionheart wanted to launch the forces of the Third Crusade against Egypt, and virtually everybody now agrees that he bequeathed this strategic notion to the thirteenth century. It is a point that hardly needs laboring that picking off the constituent elements of the Ayyubid Empire was the staple of the crusades of the thirteenth century. Egypt was agreed by the leaders and the Venetians as the objective of the Fourth Crusade, while it would seem that an attack on the same objective had been approved by Fourth Lateran as the goal of the Fifth Crusade.⁶ In general we tend to forget that Syria rather than Egypt could have been a viable target and was always preferred by the Order of the Temple. This certainly had a powerful influence upon the crusade of Theobald of Champagne whose forces attacked both Egypt and Syria.⁷ The arrival of the Mongols precipitated another strategic debate in the kingdom amongst the crusader settlers. The northern principality of Antioch was under the influence of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, whose rulers had been rescued from the Seljuk Sultanate of Iconium in Asia Minor by the Mongol victory over them in 1243. As a result, when Damascus fell to the Mongols in 1260 Bohemond VI of Antioch and Hetum of Cilicia entered the city along with the Mongol general, Kitbogha. The settlers at Acre were more fearful of the Mongols, disliked the toleration of Greek and other dissident eastern Christians that was the price of their alliance, and ultimately failed to take sides in the great conflict between them and the Egyptians that culminated in the Mongol defeat at ‘Ayn Jalut in 1260. Subsequently the papacy and occasionally the Jerusalemite rulers pursued the Mongol strategy,

this view has not been challenged. On crusader castles see Hugh Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁶ Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade*, 137.

⁷ The best account we have of this remarkable expedition is that of Sidney Painter, “The Crusade of Theobald of Champagne and Richard of Cornwall, 1239–41” in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Kenneth M. Setton, 2nd ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969–1989), 2: 463–86.

but without any real results.⁸ However, the strategic debates of the thirteenth century to a degree reflect earlier strategic discussions within the kingdom of Jerusalem, as we shall see.

Once the Holy Land was lost, of course, a series of strategic discussions were committed to paper, most notably those of Pierre Dubois and Sanudo.⁹ There are excellent discussions of these projects and others in N. Housley's work on the later crusades, and I do not propose to discuss these famous schemes in detail.¹⁰ But I do want to point out that the strategic purpose of thirteenth-century crusading was possible because there was a centralized authority offering strong direction and control—the papacy. Its control was actually imperfect, but the process of centralization gave the whole movement focus. Similarly Dubois and Sanudo assumed a central directing authority—either the papacy or the French monarchy or both in tandem. Crusading had been reinvented by Innocent III (1198–1216) and in the process radically centralized and changed. Innocent placed it at the center of policy-formation for the rulers of Europe and his successors kept up the pressure.¹¹ It has been implicitly assumed, rather than explicitly stated, that before Innocent the popes did not pursue such a policy and that, therefore, there was no such thing as crusading strategy in the twelfth century. Moreover insufficient consideration has been given to the strategic debates

⁸ On the Mongols and the Crusaders see M. N. Hardwicke, "The Crusader States, 1192–1243" and Sir Steven Runciman, "The Crusader States, 1243–91," in Setton, *Crusades*, 2: 522–98. For the history of the Mongols and their clash with Islam there is the fine study of R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus 1193–1260* (New York: State University of New York, 1977); for their military methods see J. M. Smith, "Mongol Society and Military in the Middle East: Antecedents and Adaptations," in *War and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean, 7th–15th Centuries*, ed. Yaacov Lev (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 249–66. On the later phase of crusader-Mongols relations see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: the Mamluk-Ilkhanid War 1260–81* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁹ Pierre Dubois, *The Recovery of the Holy Land*, ed. Walther I. Brandt (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956). There is no good translation of Sanudo but there is a useful study by Christopher J. Tyerman, "Marino Sanudo Torsello and the Lost Crusade: Lobbying in the Fourteenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 32 (1982): 57–73.

¹⁰ Housley, *Later Crusades*. Housley is a strong pluralist and offers a brilliant analysis of the later crusades in these terms.

¹¹ Björn Weiler, "The *Negotium Terrae Sanctae* in the Political Discourse of the Thirteenth Century, 1215–1311," *The International History Review* 25 (2003): 1–36; Maureen Purcell, *Papal Crusading Policy 1244–91* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975).

within the crusader states in the twelfth century. These are the questions that I want to address here.

It is certainly true that the twelfth century produced no treatises comparable to those of Dubois and Sanudo. It has often been remarked that debate in the twelfth century was about morality and crusading rather than anything else. But that debate did extend to some consideration of objectives. Ralph Niger was unusual in that he wrote a whole tract about crusading. He shared the moral concerns of most of his contemporaries, but he also suggested that there should be a focus on lands nearer to home than the Middle East and even questioned the belief that God wished the Holy Land to be liberated. It has been shown that some of his comments had much in common with the satires of Walter Map, which were not alone in expressing scepticism of crusading.¹² However, most comment on the crusade in the twelfth century was moral, and Niger was unusual in writing a treatise with a strategic dimension. Moreover, his work was not widely circulated. It was not, however, entirely alone in its concern with broadly strategic matters. Odo of Deuil wrote his account of the Second Crusade for the instruction of future crusaders. He and his master, Louis VII (1137–80), both agreed that masses of poor people were a hindrance to crusading, which ought to be confined to those who could afford proper arms, and this became a rule by the thirteenth century, albeit observed somewhat more in the breach than in the execution. Moreover, Odo was deeply concerned with the logistics of crusading, to which he gave great prominence.¹³ So the contrast between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is not as great as has sometimes been implied. But beyond this, what evidence is there of strategic thinking in the early crusader period?

In one sense the evidence is all too clearly before our eyes. As the pluralists have argued, crusading was essentially a papally-inspired activity. It was a strategic instrument by which the papacy asserted its centrality in the direction of European and, at least in aspiration, world politics. For the papacy the expansion of the Catholic West,

¹² See especially the comments of Elizabeth Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading 1095–1274* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 1–2, 11–13, 27.

¹³ Odo of Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici in Orientem* ed. Virginia G. Berry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948); on Odo's interest in logistics see John France, "Logistics and the Second Crusade," in *Logistics of Warfare in the Age of the Crusades*, ed. John H. Pryor (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

which began in the eleventh century, was deeply alarming. The successes in Spain threatened to bring the tiny Christian kingdoms with their rather weak churches into contact with a suspect group, the *Mozarabs*, who had been long out of touch with Rome. In the ninth century the Spanish Church was racked by the heresy of Adoptionism. This was condemned by one of the greatest of Christian assemblies of the early Middle Ages, the Council of Frankfurt, in 794, and its strictures were repeated in councils at Friuli in 796, Rome in 799 and Aachen in 800. One consequence of this affair was a deep suspicion of the native Mozarabic Rite, although this was a purely western rite inherited from the Visigothic kingdom that the Arabs had conquered in 711. As soon as the *Reconquista* began to make headway Rome insisted upon the imposition of the Roman Rite, which was decreed at the Council of Burgos in 1080. Despite bitter resistance by the *Mozarabs* their rite was virtually eliminated. This kind of problem was replicated elsewhere. Sicily and South Italy had been removed by imperial decree from the jurisdiction of Rome and placed under Constantinople. The Norman conquest of the area was an opportunity to reassert papal authority, especially as the former ruled over a very mixed population of Muslims and Greek Christians whose ideas might contaminate others. Hence in part the alliance with the Normans and the provision of a papal banner for the conquest of Sicily. In the British Isles the churches of the Celtic fringe were viewed with suspicion, although they were orthodox in belief and displayed only the most minor deviations of practice. But by the improving standards of the eleventh century they were not well organized. Problems within the Anglo-Saxon hierarchy that seemed to presage a similar weakness may well have persuaded Alexander II (1061–73) to provide a papal banner for William the Conqueror in 1066. For the papacy a degree of control of the European expansionism was essential to preserve its own position and to prevent an unthinkable outbreak of religious pluralism. It was the papacy that was anxious to sanctify war, most notably in Spain and more dubiously in England in 1066, as an instrument of control. In a changing Europe this was the very heart of its strategy.¹⁴

¹⁴ I would like to acknowledge my debt to two marvellous books, Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: the Western Church 1050–1250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), and H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073–85* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

This was made all the more urgent by the outbreak and course of the Investiture Contest. Popes had always, in a pragmatic way, waged war as an instrument of policy, and they had been able to justify it in very general terms. The ferocious intellectual struggle that accompanied the war with Henry IV forced the papacy to seek theoretical justifications for its use of violence. The “theologians of violence,” encouraged by Gregory VII (1073–85), made some progress in this direction and certainly influenced papal thinking. But the notion of war as penance already existed in Christian thinking, and it seems to have been Urban II who gave it a new emphasis. Even before Urban had launched his crusade he wrote to Robert of Flanders, probably in 1093–4, urging him, “for the remission of your sins” to help the bishop of Arras regain lands lost to Henry IV. Paschal II in 1103 wrote to the same potentate urging him to attack the imperialists at Liège in a war whose merits he virtually equated with the First Crusade. In the light of this the political crusades of Innocent III and his successors appear as logical and, in a sense, intended consequences, though it has to be said that the popes of the twelfth century were conservative in using the crusade against their enemies. So crusading was very important in the papal strategy for its institutional development.

The papacy clearly had a crusading strategy, but did the papacy have a strategy for the crusades? Here again the answer must be yes, and it has to be said that this was caught up in the very conception of the crusade. Gregory VII had wanted to lead an expedition to the Middle East to capture Jerusalem and to end the tensions between the Catholic West and the Orthodox East. This was the strategy adopted by Urban II, but his was a much wider vision. He refused to let Spanish Christians join the great expedition because he equated with it their struggle against Islam in the Hispanic peninsula. This was a vision of rolling back the tide of Islamic conquest, which had swept across the Mediterranean in the seventh century, in alliance with Byzantium. The vital element in this religious strategy was alliance with Byzantium. But it was also a sensible military strategy and the one that was actually followed by the First Crusade. The power of the papal strategic vision has not really been appreciated because the extraordinary nature of the First Crusade as an expedition has not been appreciated.

Much of the debate about the origins of the First Crusade has stressed the precedents for the expedition that Urban launched in

1095. There is no doubt that “holy war” predated the crusade. It was an organic growth developed out of a sense that certain kinds of killing were justified. As such it lacked any kind of definition. Holy War emerged as a pragmatic concept, but it lacked definition simply because it was not a concept that emerged from the musings of an authority. Modern writers have, in my view, applied it somewhat promiscuously in their eagerness to trace the “evolution” of the crusading idea. Imperial rhetoric spoke of advancing the frontiers of Christianity, but it was only occasionally reflected in reality. Henry II (1002–24) was deeply religious, but in the Baltic area he found the pagan *Liutici* a useful ally against the Christian Poles, a policy that attracted criticism from Thietmar of Merseburg. Bruno of Querfurt and Thietmar both urged the same emperor to annexe the pagan peoples and then convert them, while the West Frank, Rodulfus Glaber, echoed their call for forcible conversion for which there was ample Carolingian precedent. However, in practice the Germans were quite happy to impose a tribute domination on the pagan tribes that left them free to live by their own customs.¹⁵

After 1066 the Normans attacked Wales with vigour, beginning a slow process of conquest that was largely in the hands of local Marcher lords. Although contempt for the supposed separatist practices of the Celtic Church was part of the stock-in-trade of Anglo-Norman clerics, there is little evidence that it fired the process of conquest that was essentially secular in nature. It is often supposed that the Norman conquest of southern Italy and Sicily in the eleventh century had some of the characteristics of a *reconquista* because it transformed “a frontier between Greek east and Latin west, and Christian north and Muslim south” into “part of the Christian west.”¹⁶ I do not doubt that this was truly the effect of the Norman conquest, but I do not think it was either the purpose or the motive. Moreover, the Normans were always fairly tolerant of the practices of the native population. The Greek Church continued in the area.

¹⁵ On forced conversion in Carolingian times see John France, “Holy War and Holy Men: Erdmann and the Lives of the Saints,” in *Experience of Crusading*, 1: 197–8; Gerd Althoff, “Saxony and the Elbe Slavs in the Tenth century,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3: 267–92.

¹⁶ G. A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard. Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (London: Longman, 2000), 291.

A papal banner was produced for the conquest of Muslim Sicily by the Guiscard family, but the reality was of extensive conciliation of the Islamic population that remained in place. Pisan and Genoese naval attacks against North Africa, especially the attack on Mahdiyya in modern Tunisia in 1087, met with papal approval, but they formed part of a pattern of sea-borne raiding common enough in the Mediterranean.

The Spanish *reconquista* has been seen as the major precedent for the crusade, providing Urban with a model and all Europe with a point of reference. The words of the *Prophetic Chronicle*: "Our hope is Christ, that the enemies' boldness may be annihilated and the peace of Christ given back to Holy Church" have been much cited. But such ideas were developed at a particular time to fulfil a particular need: the early Asturian royal line needed to publicize its link with the old Visigothic house and to emphasize its inspired resistance to Islamic domination. Out of this need for support arose an entire but short-lived literature that looked to an apocalyptic overthrow of Islam, and the sanctity of war for this end was not questioned. But this does not mean that the rulers of the small Christian states saw themselves as engaged in an unremitting struggle to liberate Spain from Islam. The Christians were divided: León, Castile, Navarre and the counties around Barcelona were far from united and often deeply hostile to one another. All were reduced to subservience when the Caliphate of Cordoba was under the sway of its chief minister, Muhammad ibn Abi Amir who took the title *al-Mansur bi'llah* (victorious through God). His death in 1002, followed closely by that of his son, 'Abd al-Malik, in 1008, ushered in the collapse of Muslim unity and the dissolution of the Islamic power in Spain into numerous petty kingdoms. Even then many of these kingdoms remained formidable and the Christian rulers needed to pursue policies that suited their own kingdoms. It took time for the Christian reconquest to get under way, and it is doubtful if the Christian princes deliberately and consciously pursued a policy of reconquest. The story is told that the Christian ambassadors to the court of Granada in 1009 proclaimed:

Al-Andalus belonged first of all to the Christians until the time when they were conquered by the Arabs who drove them up to Galicia, the region of the country least favoured by nature. But now that it is possible, they want to recover all that was taken from them by force; and so that they may do so definitively, they have to weaken and exhaust

you over a period of time. When you have no money or soldiers left, we shall take possession of the country without trouble.¹⁷

However, this is a very late account reflecting the long experience of war down to the thirteenth century in which Muslim Spain was indeed made to pay tribute, enforced by savage raids, on an immense scale. The piecemeal nature of the fighting and the local nature of politics in the eleventh century often resulted in alliances across the religious divide. In 1073, Sancho IV of Navarre concluded a treaty with Zaragoza against Aragon with the objective of restoring lands that Muslim Zaragoza had lost to Aragon. Rodrigo Díaz de Bivar, the famous El Cid, became embroiled in a feud with a rival Castilian family who had attacked his ally, al-Mu'tamid of Seville, and in 1081 he was exiled by Alfonso VI (1065–1109). He then followed the life of an adventurer across the religious divide, and at the end of his life ruled the city of Valencia from 1094 to 1099, treating the Muslims there well. It was by exploiting divisions amongst his enemies, particularly over how they should react to Christian dominance, that Alfonso VI captured the old Visigothic capital of Toledo in 1085 after a siege that had lasted four years.¹⁸ In fact it was the papacy that was anxious to impose the notion of “holy war” on Spain and that was profoundly influenced in its thinking.

For a long time the wars in Spain seem to have had relatively little impact north of the Pyrenees. In 1073 Pope Gregory VII attempted to foster the Spanish wars through an expedition led by the French lord, Ebles de Roucy, but his insistence that all conquests from Islam should be regarded as the property of the Holy See caused resistance, and the result was a check for papal policy. It has been suggested that the war in Spain in the eleventh century was very much self-contained and that external support for the Christians was occasional and relatively small-scale.¹⁹

However, it seems that this situation changed towards the end of the century. The fall of Toledo was widely noted in Christian Europe.

¹⁷ Quotations from Derek W. Lomax, *The Reconquest of Spain* (London: Longman, 1978), 40, 52–3.

¹⁸ I must acknowledge my debt to R. A. Fletcher, “Reconquest and Crusade in Spain, 1050–1150,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 37 (1987): 31–47, whose scepticism about the reality of Holy War in Spain before the end of the eleventh century I share, while acknowledging that Jean Flori, *La Guerre Sainte* (Paris: Aubier, 2001) finds positive evidence for this traditional view.

¹⁹ Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade*, 70–114.

Much of the loot from Toledo was sent to Cluny and helped to finance the building of the enormous church at that monastery. These triumphs, so widely trumpeted, were followed by terrible setbacks. In desperation, the rulers of al-Andalus called in the Almoravids, a puritanical Sunni Muslim sect that had seized control of the Maghrib. On 23 October 1086, Alfonso VI was defeated at the battle of Sagradas, with huge loss of Christian life, and the whole of Christian Spain seemed to be under threat. In 1087 a large army with elements from Burgundy, Normandy, the Midi and northern France arrived, but it confined its activities to the Ebro valley. From this time marriage alliances with the north and gifts to churches multiplied, and in the early twelfth century there is no doubt that consciousness of the wars in Spain was much greater. Yet in no sense did foreign intervention save Christian Spain. The Almoravids were distracted by events in Africa and their Muslim allies in Spain resented them. It was by supporting Muslim princes against them that El Cid, who was unconcerned by the doings of those beyond the Pyrenees, was able to capture Valencia in 1094. Even more remarkable was his victory over an Almoravid siege shortly after. It was only at the very end of the century that people from north of the Alps began to take a real interest in the *reconquista*, and in fact it can be argued that the real impact of the Spanish wars before then was upon papal thinking alone and not upon wider European opinion. Urban II, and Gregory VII before him, reflected upon the Spanish conflict and promoted a view of them as holy wars. At the same time the occasional need of Spanish rulers for outside aid led them to emphasize the religious divide and the sacred nature of their expansionism. This was accentuated by the influx of northern Christians, notably Cluniacs, into the Spanish Church in the early twelfth century. Gradually, therefore, the image and reality of the wars in Spain were transformed, but this did not really occur before the twelfth century, although the process was clearly under way before the First Crusade.

When, in 1095, Urban called for an expedition to liberate Jerusalem he was, therefore, postulating an expedition almost without precedent in the history of European expansion. Hitherto European expansion had largely been a matter of propinquity. Moreover, the poor articulation of European states meant that in practice it was often, though not invariably, the work of small localized groups: the lords of the Saxon borderlands, the Marches of Wales, Norman exiles in South

Italy. No western power was adjacent to Jerusalem, the proposed target, or had any obvious interest in the conquest. Urban II certainly appealed to westerners to save the Christians of the East from subjugation to Islam, but few westerners knew or cared much about Byzantium, and there is no evidence of a widespread hatred of Islam, though undoubtedly almost all would have regarded any non-Christian religion with a degree of hostility, provided it imposed itself sufficiently upon their consciousness. Of all the powers of the European world, it was only the papacy that was really aware of and cared passionately about such remote matters. It cared passionately because issues of prestige, even its own survival, were at stake. It was a remarkably bold strategy to pursue.

There was, of course, a degree of opportunism in Urban's actions. The call from Alexius Comnenus for aid arrived just as the papacy was recovering its strength in 1095, but again this was at the heart of Urban's strategy. Alexius's appeal came precisely because he saw possibilities for the liberation of Asia Minor caused by the succession disputes within the Seljuk Empire and recognized the potential of the revived papacy under Urban II. This fortuitous development gave great force to the strategy of alliance with Byzantium, and in a real sense this was an appropriate way of going about things. Byzantium offered a launching pad for attacks on Muslim lands, and this is precisely what happened in 1097–99. In spite of the breach over Antioch, the welter of blame heaped on Manuel Comnenus over the failure of the Second Crusade and many other tensions, the staple of papal policy throughout the twelfth century was to keep the Byzantine emperors friendly, and the imperative was so strong that Baldwin III of Jerusalem was prepared to risk displeasing the Antiochenes by an alliance with Manuel Comnenus (1143–80), which imposed a kind of Byzantine protectorate over North Syria.²⁰ The crusade of Frederick I Barbarossa was undoubtedly undermined by the weakness in the Byzantine Empire, which hindered its progress through the Balkans. In 1203–4 this same weakness sucked in the Fourth Crusade and precipitated the sack of Constantinople. It is, therefore, little wonder that the papacy was so wedded to the Byzantine alliance in the thirteenth century despite the formidable obstacles. It

²⁰ Jonathan P. Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land: Relations between the Latin East and West 1119–1187* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

was the perfect union of religious and military strategies. The Latin Empire offered the opportunity of an apotheosis, but it failed. By the 1260s a renewal of the Latin Empire was backed by the papacy, which then went on to use this as a pressure on the Byzantines to achieve the Lyons Union of 1274. When that ultimately failed the projected Angevin conquest seemed the way to achieve the same end and tied the papacy to the success of the French royal house. The War of the Vespers raged for 20 years, but the papacy stuck to the policy of a Byzantine reconquest as the essential step to the liberation of Jerusalem and justified it in those terms. It was not until the 1320s that policy swung again to friendship, but by then the ancient empire was a shell barely capable of survival. Before very long as the Ottoman threat escalated, crusading reverted to one of its original intentions—the salvation of Byzantium from the Islamic threat. Byzantium offered to the papacy great possibilities in terms of its overall strategy of leadership and the rolling back of Islam, and this is the golden thread, the essential strategy, that ties together papal policy from the very beginning almost to the bitter end.²¹

It is to the scale of the success of that strategy as it was evolved by Urban II that I wish to divert attention. The debate over crusader motives, somewhat polarized as it has always been, between “religious” and “other” motives has somewhat disguised both the scale and the weaknesses of Urban’s project. To bring together so many in pursuit of an ideological end was truly without precedent. They were certainly capable of reasonably careful military organization and of thinking about how armies should be used. But conquest in their experience was mostly localized as were most of their wars. What Urban proposed was on a wholly different scale and at a tremendous distance. This speaks volumes for the persuasiveness of Urban’s idea and whatever incentives may have accompanied it. But it also casts light on the partial breakdown of Urban’s strategy because of the seizure of Antioch. In the conditions faced by the men on the ground this was not unreasonable. It is often forgotten that they tried very hard to cling to the imperial alliance. At a time when an enemy army threatened to trap them before Antioch, Bohemond claimed to have a way into the city that he was willing to reveal provided it was then given to him. The leaders refused,

²¹ Housley, *Later Crusades*, especially 49–79.

and only under the threat of the immediate arrival of the enemy army were they prepared to promise anything. Even then it was a highly conditional promise; Bohemond would have the city if Alexius failed to come and receive it. After their victory on 28 June they sent a high-level delegation to the emperor led by Hugh of Vermandois and put off the journey to Jerusalem for a period that made generous allowance for marching-time from Constantinople. The failure of Alexius to appear and the news of his desertion of their cause at Philomelium in June 1098, which was known by the autumn, convinced all but one leader that this was a failed strategy. The exception was the count of Toulouse who seems to have had a special relationship with Alexius.²² It is not necessary to demonise Bohemond and others for their greed—from their point of view what they were doing was practical and reasonable.

But from the perspective of the papacy it was clear that religious influence and aid to the crusades were intimately tied up and that Byzantine support was the best support for the nascent crusader states of the Levant. There were moments of hostility and tension including, for example, Bohemond's "crusade" against Constantinople of 1107 into which the papacy was drawn. However, as noted, the papacy pursued this policy with remarkable consistency throughout the twelfth century, and so great and obvious were its advantages that after the failure of the Second Crusade Antioch, Tripoli and Jerusalem were drawn into this strategy, despite the manifest dislike of the Greeks amongst many of the crusaders' leaders.

It has to be said that an alternate or perhaps supplementary strategy emerged in the course of the twelfth century. When Louis VII was considering his journey to the Holy Land in 1146/7, he wrote to a number of rulers whose lands lay across possible routes. Roger of Sicily (1130–54) responded with the offer of a fleet and full logistical support.²³ It is not entirely clear what this offer amounted to. If the idea was to take the whole French force all the way to Jerusalem this would have been a remarkably novel and generous offer that clearly would have simplified all Louis's logistic problems. It may be

²² On the course of events see France, *Victory in the East*, 258–62, and for the idea that Raymond of Toulouse may well have entered the service of Alexius and received from him cash support, see A. C. Mulinder, *The Crusading Expeditions of 1101–2*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales Swansea, 1996.

²³ Odo, *De Profectione Ludovici*, 11–15.

that the offer was to take only Louis VII's own troops, who actually formed the core of the whole French force. It is even possible that all that was implied was free transport and supplies across the Adriatic if Louis decided to follow the route that had been followed by the North French on the First Crusade, including his great-uncle, Hugh of Vermandois, who went through southern Italy in 1096.²⁴ If the offer was for a fleet to convey the crusade to the Holy Land it was a mark of a changing strategic reality. To a remarkable extent the Muslim powers in the Levant conceded a supremacy to the fleets of the Italian city-states of Pisa, Genoa and Venice. It is not clear why this was because in 1099 the Fatimid fleet had still been formidable. Saladin tried unsuccessfully to revive it in the 1180s but by then the process of decay had gone too far.²⁵ Roger had perhaps recognized that this opened up new strategic possibilities. The survival and expansion of the tiny bridgeheads established by the First Crusade had depended very heavily on naval support, and the continued existence of the settler states was unthinkable without them. This offered a genuine alternative strategy. The West could throw its forces at the enemy without any dependency on Byzantium. It was, of course, the basic condition of Richard I's strategy for an attack on Egypt. In practice the crusades of the thirteenth century tried to exploit this naval power. The Fifth Crusade was able to attack Egypt over a period of four years without any serious attempt to cut their sea communications. St Louis's seizure of Damietta and his long assault on Egypt were also uninterrupted by enemy action against his sea-lanes. The feebleness of the Byzantine empire after 1180 obliged the papacy to accept this naval alternative, yet with reservations. Perhaps the popes were suspicious of the independence of the Italian city-states, especially after 1204. Perhaps they too considered them to be just too self-interested and too likely to quarrel

²⁴ France, *Victory in the East*, 102–3.

²⁵ John H. Pryor, *Geography, Technology and War: Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean 649–1571* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), suggests that Arab fleets, short of wood, failed to develop casks for carrying water and so had a very limited range once the crusaders had seized some bases on the Palestinian littoral. Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 556–77, recognizes certain cultural inhibitions in the Muslim attitude to the sea and points to the blindness of the Mamluks to its importance, but above all thinks that the failure of Islam to develop great trade in the Mediterranean underlay its failure at sea. However, it should be noted that there was a great Islamic trade in the Indian Ocean and ship types were very modern.

with one another. It also has to be said that maritime supremacy was always qualified. In an age when ships depended heavily on land bases and could hold the open sea only for short periods, it must have seemed a dangerous option. For whatever reason the notion of reconquering or rebuilding the Byzantine Empire as the necessary step for the reconquest of Jerusalem dominated papal strategy, as we have seen, right through to the early fourteenth century. The war that began with the Sicilian Vespers in 1282 did not end until the Treaty of Caltabellotta of 1303, and gradually the papacy was forced to abandon hope of an Angevin conquest of Byzantium and revert to a policy of cooperation that was essentially defensive and designed to protect Byzantium from the Turkish threat. The 1330s saw the papacy sponsoring naval leagues, but only because almost all other strategies had become closed.

But what of the Franks who settled in the Holy Lands? Did they have a sense of making strategic choices? The signs are that they did. There was little unity between the principalities of the Latin East. In part this was because of rivalries between princes. However it was also the case that they had very different possibilities for expansion and therefore were forced to consider different strategies. The Antiochenes held the Jabal Ansariyah. Before them was the Orontes Valley and its eastern bank, the much lower Belus Massif and beyond that a great plain in the north of which stood Aleppo, only 100 km from Antioch along a good Byzantine road that went via Artah and a gap in the Belus Massif past Sarmada and al-Atharib. It was a tempting prospect but one fraught with difficulties. The Norman possession of Antioch was deeply resented by the Byzantines who attacked it via Cilicia, and when their power ebbed towards the end of the twelfth century the Armenians were a formidable distraction in this area. Relations with crusader Edessa, vital for expansion, were not always good. By 1119 Antioch threatened an encirclement of Aleppo that was prevented when Prince Roger was defeated and killed at the "Field of Blood." But within a few years the Franks had recovered most of what they had lost. It was the outbreak of internal conflict and the dominance of Byzantine power from the mid-century that weakened the Franks, coupled with the rise of a strong Islamic power in Aleppo under Zangi, but even so they continued to be ready to be aggressive.²⁶

²⁶ Thomas Asbridge, "The significance and causes of the battle of the Field of

The Kingdom of Jerusalem had rather different choices. At Tripoli the First Crusade had resolved not to go to Jerusalem via Damascus, but at Ramla the leaders considered an attack on Egypt as an alternative to the siege of Jerusalem. These two possible axes of attack set the strategic dilemma for the kingdom. Both were tempting. Damascus was easily accessible from the Galilee across the bare landscape of the Hawran, which posed no significant barrier despite being fairly dry. Baldwin II was especially active against Damascus between 1126 and 1129 when a crusade came from the west to his assistance, but suffered defeat at Marj al-Suffar. It was probably because of hope of conquest and later the tacit alliance with Damascus in the 1130s and 1140s that the kings of Jerusalem never permitted a strong lordship to be built up north of the Sea of Galilee.²⁷ It has also been suggested that in the 1120s Jerusalem was consciously seeking a policy of “natural frontiers,” and that this underlay the expansion of Oultrejourdain down to the Red Sea and the search for a desert frontier based on Damascus. Whether there was ever such a doctrine is debatable, not least because the new lordship was quickly granted out to vassal lords.²⁸ Egypt was also close and constituted a real threat to the kingdom until the 1120s, but it suffered from internal divisions, and the balance was clearly changing when Baldwin I died during an expedition there in 1118.

Under the two Baldwins the implications of this difference of orientation between the kingdom and the northern states was masked because both had ruled in Edessa and were deeply interested in the affairs of the north. Moreover, the kings of Jerusalem needed to offer help to the other principalities in order to gain recognition of their primacy amongst the Catholic potentates of the East. The decision to attack Damascus by the kingdom and the armies of the Second Crusade has attracted considerable criticism from modern historians who have seen it as an act of folly to have attacked the only ally Jerusalem had in the Islamic world.²⁹ But Damascus was never a

Blood,” 301–16 and *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch, 1098–1130* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000).

²⁷ Steven Tibble, *Monarchy and Lordship in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Jonathan P. Phillips, “Hugh of Payens and the 1129 Damascus Crusade,” in *The Military Orders. Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick*, ed. Malcolm Barber (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), 141–7.

²⁸ Joshua Prawer, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 471–83.

²⁹ There is no doubt that Edessa, captured by Zangi in 1144, had been the

consistent ally, and the settlers probably knew that Nur al-Din had tremendous influence in the city. In the context of Jerusalem's strategic possibilities the decision to attack Damascus taken at Easter 1148 was a reasonable one, though it failed.³⁰ It was the growing strength of Nur al-Din in Syria and fear that he would seize control of Egypt, where the Fatimid regime was disintegrating, that turned the kingdom to an attack on Ascalon in 1153 and then to the ambitious attempt to capture Egypt under Amalric I, including a joint attack with the Byzantines.³¹ But the northern strategy still remained alive. Baldwin III attacked Shayzar in alliance with Antioch, later defeated Nur al-Din before Banyas and in the battle of al-Batihah in 1158, and pursued a policy of friendship towards Byzantium, presumably with the intention of checking the sultan.³²

The Kingdom of Jerusalem suffered from a clear strategic dilemma to which Amalric I gave a very clear response by focusing on Egypt. His failure and the unification of Syria and Egypt under Saladin meant that his successors, like his predecessors, could not respond in such simple terms. Strategic dilemmas are not easily solved and

original objective, on which see Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, 82–5. Older historians who were very critical of the decision to attack Damascus include Sir Steven Runciman, *History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 2: 281; Meron Benvenisti, *The Crusaders in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Israeli Universities Press, 1970), 6; Meyer, *Crusades*, 103–4 and “Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1972): 95–182. On the other hand Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (London: Athlone, 1987), 101–2 saw good reasons for it, and has been strongly supported by M. Hoch in “The Choice of Damascus as the Objective of the Second Crusade,” in Balard, *Autour*, 359–70, and “The Crusaders’ strategy against Fatimid Ascalon and the Ascalon Project of the Second Crusade,” in *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians*, ed. Michael Gervers (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1992), 120–3.

³⁰ Alan J. Forey, “The Failure of the Siege of Damascus in 1148,” *Journal of Medieval History* 10 (1984): 13–23 has argued that this was the case and that stories of treachery and betrayal sprang up as part of the explanation for the failure of the whole Second Crusade, that it was due to the pride and folly of the Christians. Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb (London: Luzac, 1932), 286–7 speaks of “the rapid advance of the Islamic armies” causing the Franks to “retreat in disorder”; Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, 98–9 agrees.

³¹ P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades* (London: Longman, 1986), 44–5; Marshall W. Baldwin, “The Latin States under Baldwin III and Amalric I” in Setton, *Crusades*, 1: 536–8 and H. A. R. Gibb, “The Career of Nur ad-Din” in Setton, *Crusades*, 1: 516–9; Gustave L. Schlumberger, *Campagnes du roi Amaury I en Egypte* (Paris: Plon, 1906). On help from the west, notably for Amalric’s campaigns in Egypt see Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, 140–67.

³² Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, 271–81; Baldwin, “Latin States under Baldwin III and Amalric,” 539–47.

they change. The destruction of the kingdom and its partial restoration was a radical change in circumstances, and in effect the kingdom adopted a Mr Micawber strategy. Its own strength was limited and it sought outside allies, seeking for the most part to live with its Muslim neighbors. This could well have worked. The conflicts within the Ayyubid house threatened to tear the Islamic world apart. The Fifth Crusade came within an ace of success, and Frederick II exposed the real possibilities of the situation. A little later the Mongols seemed to present real possibilities of destroying Islam. And despite the bitter internal conflicts that erupted in the 1230s and 1240s, the kingdom could still raise a substantial force, as it proved at La Forbie. Ultimately it was the failure of leadership and the subsequent factionalism that destroyed it.

Crusading was a papal strategy to achieve survival and perhaps dominance in a changing Europe, and it continued to have that character throughout and beyond the medieval period. This strategy was always centrally concerned with the Eastern Mediterranean. This is not because crusades were not directed elsewhere, but because Jerusalem, as a result of the success of the First Crusade, encapsulated many of the religious preoccupations of aristocratic and knightly Europe. In the struggle for Jerusalem the military consequence was the Byzantine alliance, which at times meant friendship, coercion or even conquest. To a degree this proved a sensible military strategy, and this was true down to the collapse of the kingdom of Jerusalem in 1187. Thereafter, despite the obvious rise of an alternative sea-borne strategy, the papacy clung to the Byzantine alternative—not, it has to be said, without reason. But there was an obvious failure to adjust to reality, and it may be that the papacy was almost as blind to maritime possibilities as the Mamluks were to be. The settlers themselves clearly perceived their strategic alternatives but ultimately lacked the power and numbers to combat the problems posed. In the thirteenth century, lacking a real king, they dissolved into narrow factionalism and failed to pursue any policy or exploit any situation to their advantage. The papacy continued to attempt to revive the crusader states but even when its strategy seemed most appropriate lacked the control and concentration of power that was needed to rescue and hold Jerusalem.

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THE TORTURE OF MILITARY CAPTIVES IN THE CRUSADES TO THE MEDIEVAL MIDDLE EAST

Piers D. Mitchell

When warfare in the crusades is considered, it is often taken for granted that those on the losing side who were captured may have been treated badly. Depending on where the battle was and who was fighting, common outcomes included being interrogated to obtain information, being held in prison awaiting the payment of a ransom, being executed or being sold into slavery. Torture might theoretically have been employed in the context of each of the first three of these options. Apart from an interesting discussion in a work on prisoners in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, there has been virtually no published work discussing the use of torture in the crusades.¹ This could be because the details of torture methods may be upsetting to some. However, it is only by discussing the actions of mankind in the past, good or bad, that we can really understand what it was like to live in different historical time periods and how the social norms of today came to exist.

In order to gain a full understanding of medieval torture, it is helpful to be aware of the kinds of torture in use in Europe at that time. This will provide a context from which to view the activities of those parties practising torture in the Latin East. Typical tortures employed by the inquisition in Europe from the thirteenth century onwards included the pulley, the fire, and the rack.² The pulley consisted of attaching weights to the feet and then suspending the prisoner from a rope tied to the wrists behind his back. A pulley above him was used to raise and suddenly drop the person until the shoulders dislocated. A number of techniques employed fire to torture a victim. One of the more common involved fixing the prisoner in

¹ Yvonne Friedman, *Encounters Between Enemies: Captivity and Ransom in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), 118–29.

² George R. Scott, *A History of Torture* (London: Werner Laurie, 1940), 67; Edward E. Peters, *Torture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 40–73.

stocks and roasting their hands and feet until they confessed to whatever crimes they were alleged to have committed. The rack was a frame onto which the prisoner was strapped by the wrists and ankles. The length of the frame was gradually increased so that the joints of the limbs and back became distracted and dislocated. In many parts of Europe torture was used frequently by the time of the crusades, and in 1252 Pope Innocent IV went as far as to issue a decree confirming the use of torture in canon-law procedure.³ With the loss of the mainland Frankish states between 1291 and 1302 some soldiers in the military orders returned to Europe and found they had leapt "from the frying pan into the fire." Members of the Order of the Temple in Europe were tortured in 1308 to obtain confessions that would support the attempts by the king of France to dissolve the order and so acquire its wealth. Bernard de Gué had his feet so badly burnt that some bone from his heel actually fell out from his foot a few days later. Ponsard de Gissy was kept in prison for three months with his hands tied behind his back so tightly that blood was seen to run down his fingernails.⁴ However, while such practices were commonplace in many countries at that time, they were by no means universal. For example, torture as a punishment or method of gaining a confession is thought to have been unusual in England at the time of the crusades. Poor treatment in prison certainly did occur, but the use of instruments of torture appears to have started only in the fourteenth century.⁵ Indeed, jailers were themselves convicted in court if they were found to be using torture to extort money from their prisoners.⁶ It seems that the application of torture in medieval Europe varied over time and between countries, but it was a fact of life for many of the people who lived there.

It is also useful to briefly discuss the long term effects that torture can have on those who survive the experience. These can be cate-

³ John H. Langbein, *Torture and the Law of Proof* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977), 7.

⁴ Brian Innes, *The History of Torture* (Leicester: Blitz, 1999), 47; Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood: a History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 301; Peter Partner, *The Knights Templar and their Myth* (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1987), 60–1.

⁵ John Bellamy, *Crime and Public Order in England in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 139, 182–3.

⁶ Ralph B. Pugh, *Imprisonment in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 180.

gorized into physical, social and psychological effects. The physical effects are perhaps the most obvious. Stretching on the rack would damage the joints of the limbs and spine, cause chronic pain and afterwards make manual work very difficult. Burning the feet would lead to great difficulty walking in later life due to scarring, blisters and pain. The social effects would depend on the torture employed. Cutting off the nose would cause disfigurement, impair later marriage prospects, and would have been interpreted by many as a sign that the victim had broken the law. Psychological effects are often noted in modern torture victims. It is common to experience feelings of guilt, anxiety, depression and sometimes to contemplate suicide.⁷ Post traumatic stress disorder is a particular problem. Between ten and ninety percent of torture victims develop this disorder at some stage in their lives. The risk is highest in those psychologically unprepared for the torture and in those who experience extreme fear and anxiety during the torture. The risk is not dependent upon the method of torture or frequency of its use. Common symptoms include impaired memory and concentration, nightmares and sleep disturbance, flashbacks of the torture episode, and flattened emotions.⁸ The use of torture by mankind has a long history,⁹ and the examples noted here, dating from the crusades, might be thought of as mere cases within this wider setting. However, if they are seen in the context of the crusades and the settled Latin East then it helps us to understand the mistrust between Europeans and Muslims, the fear of capture by crusaders and pilgrims, and the adverse effect upon health in the population of the Frankish states.¹⁰

Sources of evidence

The written evidence for torture in the Latin East comes from a variety of sources. Some chronicles of a particular crusade mention

⁷ Dianna Ortiz, "The Survivors Perspective: Voices from the Center," in *The Mental Health Consequences of Torture*, ed. Ellen Gerrity, Terence M. Keane and Farris Tuma (New York: Kluwer, 2001), 13–34.

⁸ Metin Basoglu et al., "Torture and Mental Health: a Research Overview," in *The Mental Health Consequences of Torture*, 35–62.

⁹ Page DuBois, *Torture and Truth* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 47–62; Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: the Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 27–59.

¹⁰ Piers D. Mitchell, *Medicine in the Crusades: Warfare, Wounds and the Medieval Surgeon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press).

either the use of torture by the crusaders on their captives or the torture of crusader soldiers themselves captured by Muslim forces. Other chronicles describe tortures applied by previous Muslim rulers to local eastern Christians who were released when the newly arrived crusaders overthrew the local rulers. Most of these texts were written by Europeans, although a few Arabic texts are available to give the Muslim perspective. Torture applied outside the context of a specific crusading expedition tends to be mentioned in histories covering particular periods within the two hundred year lifespan of the Frankish states. Again, most of these were written either by Europeans or settlers of Frankish stock who lived in the Latin East. However, a small number were written in other languages, such as the Syriac works by eastern Christian authors and the Arabic works by Muslim historians. Some authors were contemporary with the periods covered by their texts, but others wrote retrospectively and had to rely on older written sources or the recollections of others to provide the details. In consequence, we must be cautious of unquestioningly taking some passages as factual when the actual events may have taken place even before the author was born. The details may have been true if relayed to the author by an elderly eyewitness, but alternatively they may have been fabricated by the author to create a plausible description for the medieval reader. I have tried to highlight such cases in the discussion below.

The legal codes of the Latin East are highly illuminating for our purposes as they describe the use of torture in the judicial process, often for determining guilt or innocence. The most useful codes in this respect are the *Livre des Assises de la Cour des Bourgeois* from the Kingdom of Jerusalem, dating from around 1240–44, and the almost identical *Assises of Cyprus*.¹¹ Using the combination of these legal codes, chronicles and histories we can start to understand not only how torture was used within the framework of the law, but also in times when laws meant little, namely when a captive was at the mercy of a military victor.

¹¹ *Assises de Jérusalem: Les Livres des Assises et des Usages de Reaume de Jérusalem*, ed. Eduard H. Kausler (Stuttgart: Adolf Krabbe, 1839), Vol. 1; *Assises of the Lusignan Kingdom of Cyprus*, ed. Nicholas Coureas (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2002).

Who used torture, and why

If we are to understand who was affected by torture in the crusades and the Latin East, it is important to know which groups were using it and against whom. The examples below show that it was actually used by all social, cultural and religious groups. There are cases where torture was used by Christians from Europe, eastern Christians and Muslims. It does not appear to have been reserved for prisoners of a different religion to the person instigating the torture. Christians from Europe tortured not only Muslims but also eastern Christians and other Europeans. Even the Patriarch of Antioch underwent torture when the ruler of the principality had an argument with him. As this study is principally of the crusades it is worth pointing out that I have not investigated the use of torture by Muslims upon other Muslims, although this is known to have occurred.¹² Another interesting point is the date when torture was described. There is relatively little written evidence for the use of torture in eleventh century Europe compared with the fourteenth century onwards. In consequence I expected to find that the early crusaders did not use torture much. However, this is not in fact the case. The earliest crusader sources describe clear examples of torture, right from the first expeditions taking part in the First Crusade. This suggests that torture was not a practice learned from others already living in the east on their arrival. It seems that those embarking on the First Crusade were already proficient in the use of torture and were not reluctant to use it. It is likely that the apparent silence in the eleventh century European written sources merely reflects that people wrote little about torture and not that torture was avoided. Having shown who was employing torture, it is important to determine why they used it. In order to do this I shall discuss a number of examples that illustrate that torture had a wide range of uses to those in positions of power in the crusades and settled Latin East.

Torture was sometimes used to obtain information from a prisoner to improve the chances of victory in a forthcoming battle. On

¹² Barber Johansen, "Verité et Torture: Ius Commune et Droit Musulman Entre le X^e et le XIII^e Siècle," in *De la Violence*, ed. F. Héritier (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1996), 123–68; Barber Johansen, "La Découverte des Choses qui Parlent. La Législation de la Torture Judiciaire en Droit Musulman (XIII^e–XIV^e siècles)," *Enquête* 7 (1998): 175–202.

the First Crusade in 1097 a man was sent by Kilij-Arslan, the Sultan of Rum, to spy on the crusading army as it crossed Asia Minor. When he was captured by the Franks he was led before the leaders of the expedition:

Bohemond, Godfrey and the rest used threats of torture to force the man who had been caught to explain without any lies the reason why he had come. He, moreover, terrified by the threats of so many excellent princes and realising his life hung in the balance, was insistently beseeching them for his life and safety with a tearful voice, a humble expression and a continuous flood of tears, trembling in every limb.¹³

While no details of the type of torture threatened are given, it was clearly enough to make this man terrified. In August 1099 the same army was at the coastal town of Ascalon and in need of intelligence about the enemy army as they were facing an imminent battle. They came across some local farmers looking after their sheep and cattle as they grazed. They rounded up as many as they could and then “compelled the captives to reveal [the enemy’s] plans, state of preparations and their numbers.”¹⁴ We can only guess the methods they used to gain the information, but it was likely to have been unpleasant.

Another common reason for the use of torture was to persuade someone to hand over control of a castle or other valuable objects. One of the leaders of the First Crusade, Baldwin of Boulogne, took control of the fortress of Ravendel (modern Ravanda) in the autumn of 1097. Unfortunately he entrusted its care to an Armenian Christian named Pakrad. This man’s brother was called Koch Vasil (Basil the Robber) but apparently this did not alert Baldwin to the character of the family. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Pakrad refused to let any of Baldwin’s men into the castle and set up his son as commander. Baldwin then resorted to torturing Pakrad in order to get his castle back. Baldwin ordered that he should “be bound with chains and tortured until he was forced to give up the fortress. But he was still not driven to give it up by undergoing any method of torture or

¹³ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, ed. and trans. Susan Edgington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, in press), 2.26.

¹⁴ Raymond d’Aguilers, *Le Liber de Raymond d’Aguilers*, ed. John H. Hill and Laurita L. Hill (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1969), 156–7; Translated by John H. Hill and Laurita L. Hill as *Historia Francorum qui Ceperunt Iherusalem* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), 134.

fear for his life. Baldwin, overcome by loathing of the man's tortures, finally ordered that he should be torn limb from limb while yet alive unless he gave him satisfaction concerning the fortress's return."¹⁵ Not surprisingly, Pakrad then had a change of heart and gave the castle back to Baldwin. Another example was that of Count Walter of Brienne. After the battle of Gaza in 1244, Count Walter was tortured by the Sultan of Damascus in front of the walls of Jaffa to encourage it to surrender. "They hung him by the arms from a gibbet and said that they would not take him down until the castle of Jaffa was in their hands. While he was so hanging, the count called out to those in the castle not to surrender the town, no matter what torture they might inflict on him."¹⁶

Torture was also employed to extract money from someone or to persuade captives to agree to provide a large ransom. In July 1109 King Baldwin I accepted the surrender of the town of Tripoli, which had until that time remained in Muslim hands in exchange for annual tribute. Some of the inhabitants who chose to remain in the city after the surrender were tortured by the crusaders for both information and money.¹⁷ Baldwin of Ramla was a captive of Saladin in Damascus around 1180. When Baldwin explained that he could not pay his ransom it seems that Saladin lost his temper. He replied that "either he would pay up or he would pull every tooth he had in his mouth. Baldwin told him to go ahead as he could not pay. So Saladin ordered his teeth to be pulled out. They pulled two of them, at which point, so great was the pain, he cried for mercy and said that he would pay the ransom which amounted to at least 200,000 bezants."¹⁸

Torture was employed as a method of punishment on many occasions. Two early cases are given here as examples. In the autumn of 1098 Pakrad's men, mentioned earlier, were still causing trouble by robbing both crusaders and local Armenians in the region of

¹⁵ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, 3.18.

¹⁶ John of Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis: Jean Sire de Joinville*, ed. Natalis de Wailly (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères, 1874), 292–4; Translated by René Hague as *The Life of St. Louis* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 160.

¹⁷ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, 11.14.

¹⁸ Ernoul, *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*, ed. Marie L. de Mas Latrie (Paris: Jules Renouard, 1871), 57; Translated by Peter W. Edbury as "The Chronicle of Ernoul and Bernard the Treasurer," in *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade: Sources in Translation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), 151.

Ravendel.¹⁹ The crusaders stormed the castle that Pakrad was using as a base and blinded twenty of the soldiers inside “in retribution and revenge.” Blinding was a punishment used both in Europe and the Byzantine Empire, since it prevented the individual from causing trouble in the future but was favored by the church as it allowed later repentance for their crimes.²⁰ Just when Baldwin hoped things would calm down there was an attempted coup by Armenians in his principal city, Edessa. Having rounded up the perpetrators he accepted bribes in return for their lives as he was short of money. However, he ordered some to be blinded and others to be banished after having their noses, hands, feet or other parts cut off as a punishment.²¹ While no archeological cases of such mutilation have been identified so far in the Middle East, cases have been excavated from medieval Europe.²² Sometimes the powerful lost their temper even with the most senior of the clergy and tortured them. In the 1150s Reynald of Châtillon, then the Prince of Antioch, had an argument with the Patriarch of Antioch. In a fit of rage Reynald ordered that the patriarch be taken to the citadel of Antioch and forced “to sit in the blazing sun throughout a summers day, his bare head smeared with honey. No one, for piety’s sake, offered him any relief from the relentless rays of the sun or tried to drive away the flies.”²³ While the method of torture does not appear as unpleasant as some, the important position of this elderly cleric means that Reynald was treading a fine line between asserting his authority and being excommunicated.

¹⁹ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, 5.14.

²⁰ Gordon. M. Bruce, “A Note on Penal Blinding in the Middle Ages,” *Annals of Medical History* 3 (1941): 369–71; J. Lascaratos, “The Penalty of Blinding During Byzantine Times: Medical Remarks,” *Documenta Ophthalmologica* 81 (1992): 133–44.

²¹ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, 5.17; Guibert of Nogent, *Dei Gesta Per Francos*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 165; Translated by Robert Levine as *The Deeds of God Through the Franks: Gesta Dei Per Francos* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 71.

²² Don R. Brothwell and Vilhelm Møller-Christensen, “Medico-historical aspects of a very early case of mutilation,” *Danish Medical Bulletin* 10 (1963): 21–5; Per Holck, “To Catch a Thief: a Find from a Medieval Churchyard,” in *Advances in Paleopathology*, ed. Luigi Capasso (Chieti: Marino Solfanelli, 1989), 121–124; Milan Stloukal and Lubos Vyhnanek, “Amputations d’Extrémités dans les Ensembles Datant du Moyen Âge,” in *Advances in Paleopathology*, 187–90.

²³ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Brepols: Turnhout, 1986), 18.1; Translated by Emily A. Babcock and August C. Krey as *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea* (New York: Columbia, 1943), 2: 235.

Torture of a captive was also used to demoralize the victim's relatives or military comrades who remained free, as they themselves could not be touched. In December 1097, during the long siege of Antioch by the armies of the First Crusade, Count Raymond of Toulouse captured a young Turkish nobleman during a skirmish outside the city walls. They tried to persuade the nobleman's family to surrender a tower in the city walls, which they were guarding, in return for their son. News of the negotiations between the family and the crusaders reached the city rulers and the family was moved to a different part of the city. In consequence the crusaders "put the youth to death by beheading, dragging him before the city walls in full view of all the Turks; by this time he was wretched and scarcely breathing on account of torture, since for not much less than a month of constant baiting and different torments had been inflicted on him."²⁴ Death must have been a relief after such an ordeal. During the Third Crusade, King Richard the Lionheart of England annexed the Byzantine island of Cyprus from its ruler, Emperor Isaac Ducas Comnenus. In May 1191 the inhabitants of Nicosia formally acknowledged Richard as their lord while Isaac was still trying to resist the Franks from the other end of the island. Richard de Templo tells us that "when the emperor heard this he was beside himself with fury. He had as many of our people as he could seized and had one of their eyes put out, or their nose cut off, or an arm or foot mutilated, exacting whatever revenge he could to soothe his rancour."²⁵ In the same year the armies of the Third Crusade were besieging the city of Acre. That June the crusaders captured a Muslim ship trying to break the blockade and reach the city with supplies. Saladin's biographer, Ibn Shaddad, described how the crusaders "picked up one of the crew, took him on board their galleys and saved him from drowning, but they mutilated him and sent him to the city to report the disaster."²⁶ This appears to have

²⁴ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, 3.56.

²⁵ Richard de Templo, *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, ed. William Stubbs, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*, or *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages*, Rolls Series 38(i) (London: Longman, 1864), 201; Translated by Helen Nicholson as *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: a Translation of Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 193.

²⁶ Ibn Shaddad, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, trans. Donald S. Richards (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 151.

been done to demoralize the weakening defenders inside the city.

One of the most distasteful uses of torture, from a modern perspective, was when its only use was merely as a grotesque sport for the victor. At most, it could be said to encourage the victor's troops by providing images of the weakness and vulnerability of the enemy. The clearest example of this use of torture as entertainment was by Il-Ghazi in Aleppo. The Battle of the Field of Blood took place between Antioch and Aleppo on 28 June 1119. The Muslim forces of Il-Ghazi soundly beat the Frankish troops under Roger, the Prince of Antioch. Large numbers were captured and those not executed underwent torture at the hands of Il-Ghazi. Knowledge of the situation is extremely detailed as one of those captured was Walter the Chancellor of Antioch, who wrote of his experiences in his chronicle, *The Antiochene Wars*. The injured and poor foot soldiers were beheaded after a period in chains without water in the heat of summer. The nobles were transferred to Aleppo and underwent extremely unpleasant treatment. Many were whipped and beaten at the pillory before meeting their deaths. Often knights were forced to see their comrades die before them, so that by the time their turn came these battle hardened soldiers were reduced to a state of fear where "their teeth chattered and their bowels trembled."²⁷ The actual details of the wide range of tortures used are given in a later section. The variety of different tortures suggests that Il-Ghazi and his men had tried to be ingenious in deciding how to give the captives as painful a death as possible. Many of the mutilated bodies were then thrown into the town squares to die as a spectacle for the local population. A small number were ransomed and lived to tell of their experiences.

Torture was widely used to extract a confession from someone suspected of wrongdoing. An early case of burning for witchcraft used torture to extract the required confession. In 1187 some sergeants from the Frankish army found an old woman from Nazareth traveling on a donkey, and they suspected she was running away from her Frankish Lord. They tortured her to find out what she was doing. "She revealed that she was a sorceress and had cast a spell

²⁷ Walter the Chancellor, *Galteri Cancellarii, Bella Antiochena*, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Innsbruck: Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1896), 91–4; Translated by Thomas Asbridge and Susan Edgington as *The Antiochene Wars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 132–6 and 163–4.

on the men of the host [. . .] Then they collected brushwood and dry grass and made a big fire and pushed her on it."²⁸ Of course the truth of what this woman was actually doing is likely to have been very different, and it is probable that her admitting to be a sorceress was the only way she could see to stop the torture.

The thirteenth century laws of the kingdom of Jerusalem and later Cyprus also mention the use of torture in the judicial process. In those laws where it was used, it was typically employed because there were no eyewitnesses to critical aspects of the crime. If a slave stole an object from someone and was suspected of giving or selling it to another free man, and this free man was seen by witnesses talking to this slave, the free man was tortured until he agreed to return the possessions to the rightful owner.²⁹ Another role for torture was to determine the events surrounding an unlicensed burial. If it was discovered that an individual had been buried under a house, rather than in a cemetery, the body was to be exhumed and studied to determine the cause of death. If it was thought that the individual had died from suffocation or weapon injuries, the court was obliged to torture those living in the house to find out the events behind the death. Those who admitted during the torture to having committed the murder were then buried alive in the ground, positioned vertically with their heads downwards and feet nearest the surface.³⁰ More straightforward cases of murder also sometimes warranted the use of torture by the courts. If a man was accused of murder by relatives of the dead man, then their evidence was not regarded as credible as a truly independent witness. The accused man was therefore to undergo three days of torture. If he denied the charges throughout this period of torture, then he was to be put in jail for a year and a day in case any independent witnesses came forward. If no witnesses presented themselves in that time then he would be acquitted. The accused could opt for trial by ordeal during this time in prison, and if he passed the test then he was acquitted, although failure led to a conviction for the crime.³¹

²⁸ Continuation of William of Tyre, *La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (1184–1197)*, ed. Margaret R. Morgan (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1982), 47; Translated by Peter W. Edbury as *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade: Sources in Translation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), 40.

²⁹ Coureas, *Assises of Cyprus*, 165.

³⁰ Coureas, *Assises of Cyprus*, 209.

³¹ Coureas, *Assises of Cyprus*, 198.

Laws such as these demonstrate that by the later years of the Latin East, torture had become an acceptable tool for the state to employ even on Christians of Latin stock. However, its use by the courts was restricted to cases where insufficient evidence was available from reliable witnesses. In the first example, the slave was not regarded as a credible witness as he was not a free man, and the circumstantial evidence from witnesses who saw the slave and free man talking together was regarded as sufficiently suspicious to warrant further inquiry. The second and third cases described were much more serious, in that they referred to murder. In each case, torture was used when there were no independent witnesses to the alleged crime. Trial by ordeal was an option that a man accused of murder could request, in the absence of sufficient witnesses, to avoid having to languish in prison for a whole year in case any witnesses appeared. However, trial by ordeal was not an option for those who had buried a body under their house. Their fate was to be much worse.

Torture techniques

Some of the actual methods used to torture captives have been mentioned above, but it is helpful to try and classify the techniques used in a more systematic manner. In this way we can suggest how they were introduced and perhaps infer which types of torture might have been employed in those instances where no details were given. I have noticed that three broad categories seem to encompass virtually all the examples of torture recorded during the crusader period.

The first category includes those forms of torture that appear to have been borrowed from military training and the practice of warfare. The instruments of torture are all standard weapons, and the location of torture was often on the battlefield itself. However, this category of torture was highly transferable, just as soldiers were, and examples have been found from most conceivable settings. One highly visual description of the use of a wide range of such military tortures was by Il-Ghazi in Aleppo in 1119 on the Frankish captives from Antioch.³² Some were hung upside down by the feet and used as target practice for archers, some were buried up to their groin,

³² Walter the Chancellor, *The Antiochene Wars*, 163.

navel or chin and speared with lances, while others had every limb cut off with swords. Another example can be found in the case of Count Joscelyn of Edessa and King Baldwin II of Jerusalem. They had the misfortune to be held in prison in the fortress of Quartapiert, to the east of the Euphrates river. A group of Armenians bluffed their way in, took over the citadel and rescued them. Unfortunately Balak, who owned the castle, then retook it. He spared the life of King Baldwin but not those of the Armenians. William of Tyre wrote some decades later of the torture employed by Balak, so we have to use some caution in interpreting the details of this event. I have included several of the recorded tortures in the second category, but one technique clearly had military origins. William noted that many of the Armenians were “handed over to his men to serve as targets in archery practice.”³³

The second category includes those methods of torture that appear more at home in a butcher’s shop or surgeon’s operating table. These include the skilled use of sharp blades, hot iron, forceps and similar equipment. These instruments would have been available to artisans in medieval towns and are a distinct group from the weapons used on the battlefield. The techniques appear more sophisticated than the military techniques and may have required the employment of specific individuals skilled with such implements to use them effectively. Baldwin of Ramla had his teeth pulled out while a captive of Saladin in Damascus around 1180.³⁴ We presume that forceps or pliers may have been used to avulse each tooth. A torture method requiring skill with a sharp blade was flaying alive. Here a knife was used to slice off sections of the skin and underlying soft tissues from the limbs and trunk. Since the skin is so sensitive to touch this was a particularly painful procedure. When sufficiently large areas of the skin had been cut away the individual would die from blood loss. To continue the example of Count Joscelyn of Edessa and King Baldwin II of Jerusalem described by William of Tyre, we hear how some of the Armenians “were flayed alive, others sawn in two and others still buried alive.”³⁵ Some of the Franks tortured by Il-Ghazi in 1119 were apparently flayed alive near the

³³ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 12.19; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds*, 1: 544.

³⁴ Ernoul, *Chronique*, 57; Ernoul, *Conquest of Jerusalem*, 151.

³⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 12.19; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds*, 1: 544.

battlefield where they were captured.³⁶ The marquis Conrad was murdered at Tyre in 1192. He was stabbed to death by two members of the Assassins. Most of the written records merely mention that they were caught and then killed but do not give much detail as to how this was done. However, the English chronicler Roger of Howden is more specific. It is possible that he heard the details in person from an English participant in the Third Crusade, but it is hard to be completely certain that his version of the story is true. He recounted that “one of them was immediately put to death while the other was flayed alive.”³⁷ One technique we find used again and again was flaying alive. It was one of the most unpleasant methods used to torture someone to death in the medieval period and appears to have been a fairly common one in the medieval Middle East if this evidence is representative.

The third category is for those forms of torture where complex equipment was designed specifically for use in a prison or a similar secure area for captives. Sometimes these torture instruments were transported with armies to the battlefield, but often they are mentioned as being in cities or castles. Some of the equipment was fairly simple, but others required a significant degree of workmanship to design and construct. Whipping and beating at the pillory was mentioned in 1119 in Aleppo as a torture for the soldiers of Antioch.³⁸ We have already noted that Count Walter of Brienne was suspended inside a gibbet by the Sultan of Damascus during the siege of Jaffa in 1244.³⁹ Several references are made to the use of the rack or tortures that had the same effect. In 1097 Baldwin threatened Pakrad with being torn limb from limb.⁴⁰ However, it is not clear whether this was to take place on the rack or by some other means, such as

³⁶ Walter the Chancellor, *Bella Antiochena*, 91; Walter the Chancellor, *The Antiochene Wars*, 132.

³⁷ Roger of Howden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Hoveden*, ed. William Stubbs, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*, or *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages*, Rolls Series 51 (London: Longman, 1870), 3: 181; Translated by Henry R. Riley as *The Annals of Roger of Hoveden, Comprising the History of England and of Other Countries of Europe from AD 732 to AD 1201* (London: H. G. Bohn, 1853), 2: 267.

³⁸ Walter the Chancellor, *Bella Antiochena*, 94; Walter the Chancellor, *The Antiochene Wars*, 135.

³⁹ John of Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, 292–4; John of Joinville, *The Life of St. Louis*, 160.

⁴⁰ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, 3.18.

being tied to four horses by the wrists and ankles. Another possible example of the use of the rack was recorded by William of Tyre. During the siege of Jerusalem by the crusaders in July 1099 the Frankish cleric, Gerard, who ran the hospice that later evolved into the hospital of St. John, may have been subjected to torture with this machine. William, writing some years later, claimed that "they beat him and cast him into prison. There he was subjected to torture so terrible that the joints of both his hands and feet were wrenched apart and his limbs became practically useless."⁴¹ If William really did know what had happened to Gerard several decades before, it may have been from talking with survivors of the First Crusade. If that was the case then this would confirm that a version of the rack was being employed in the prisons of Jerusalem in 1099. If it is argued that William might have made up the details of Gerard's suffering to show how holy and meritorious this cleric was, then the reasoning as to why William chose this method of torture for his example is still of interest. If the rack was never used in Frankish prisons we might have expected him to suggest another form of torture more well known to his readers. However, the use of this example would suggest that the rack was a form of torture used in the Frankish states of the late twelfth century, the time when William was writing. Following the possible use of the rack on Brother Gerard in 1099, the rack is again referred to in thirteenth century Cyprus. The Latin Church there was concerned by the rise in the use of flute players and hired female mourners who would wail at funerals. They claimed that it not only disturbed divine service but was also a pagan ritual. Archbishop Hugh of Fagiano ruled in 1252–7 that "if from this point on these [singing women] should go against our prohibition, we shall have them captured, beaten, put on the rack and then thrown into prison until they learn from the instruction of punishment how much they have transgressed."⁴² While reference to the use of the rack in the twelfth century Latin East is rather circumstantial, we can be fairly confident that it was in use in the thirteenth century.

After the defeat of the Seventh Crusade in 1250, King Louis IX

⁴¹ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 7.23; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds*, 1: 335.

⁴² *Synodicum Nicosiense and Other Documents of the Latin Church of Cyprus, 1196–1373*, ed. Christopher Schabel (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2001), 100–1, doc. XX.

of France underwent interrogation and was threatened by his Egyptian captors:

The sultan's council tested the king in the same way as they had tested us, to see whether he would promise to surrender any of the castles of the Temple or the Hospital or of the Syrian barons. By God's will, the king gave them the same answer as we had done. They threatened him and said that as he would not agree they would put him in the bernicles. The bernicles are the most cruel torture that you can suffer. They consist of two pliable lengths of wood, armed at the end with teeth. They fit together and are lashed at the end with strong ox hide thongs. When they wish to put people in them they lay the victims on their sides and insert the legs between their teeth. Then they have a man sit on the planks. The result is that there is not six inches of unbroken bone in the legs. To make the torture as severe as possible, at the end of three days when the legs are swollen, they place them in the bernicles again and break them afresh.⁴³

Luckily for the king, they did not use them on him in the end. However, to encourage King Louis to swear the required oath that he would pay his own ransom, the Egyptians "took the Patriarch away from the king and tied him with his hands behind his back to a tent-pole, so tightly that his hands swelled to the size of his head and blood spurted out from his nails. The Patriarch cried out to the king, 'Sir, for the love of God, I beg you to take the oath.'"⁴⁴ If compression is applied to a limb the first blood vessels to be occluded are the veins as they have a thin vessel wall and the blood inside is at low pressure. The pressure in the arteries is much higher, and it is not difficult to reach a point where blood enters the limb in the arteries as normal but cannot leave as the veins are occluded. This results in swelling of the tissues with the extra blood, as seen here. After a while the pressure in the tissues also increases so the blood vessels rupture, and this might explain the blood around the nails. After some hours of interrupted blood flow the tissues start to die, a state known as compartment syndrome.⁴⁵ This is an exquisitely painful condition and might be expected to break the resolve

⁴³ John of Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, 184–6; John of Joinville, *The Life of St. Louis*, 109.

⁴⁴ John of Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, 198; John of Joinville, *The Life of St. Louis*, 116.

⁴⁵ K. Johansen and J. Watson, "Compartment Syndrome: New Insights," *Seminars in Vascular Surgery* 11 (1998): 294–301; J. A. Ortiz and R. A. Berger, "Compartment Syndrome in the Hand and Wrist," *Hand Clinics* 14 (1998): 405–18.

of the most determined prisoner. If bonds causing the compartment syndrome remained in place for sufficient time the tissues would have been so damaged that at best the prisoner would have been left with scarred, paralysed hands while at worst the soft tissues may have sloughed off and resulted in his death.

Contemporary attitudes to torture

Now that it has been shown that torture was in fairly widespread use by all major groups in the crusades and the Latin East, it would be interesting to know what people of the time actually thought of its use. They might have thought of it as a reasonable and appropriate level of force, or they might have regarded it as a cruel and feared threat hanging over all their heads, ensuring they kept their place in society and behaved themselves. Certainly, the use of torture may have been regarded in a very different way, within the context of the law, when compared with the torture of captured soldiers. Crusaders, almost by definition, were regarded in Europe as doing God's work and therefore unlikely to be worthy of punishment. However, criminals who were suspected of theft or murder might have received less sympathy from their neighbors if tortured. Torture was often rationalized in the Frankish mind with the decision that it was acceptable to use it on non Christians ("pagans"), which in practice usually meant Muslims. However, being Christian did not always prevent the use of torture by another Frank if they were angry and powerful enough. It has been effectively argued that crusaders and settlers in the Kingdom of Jerusalem thought it perfectly acceptable to use torture against an enemy in order to obtain information.⁴⁶ Based on the large number of examples of this in the written records, I would say that this applies to the other Frankish states in the Latin East as well. Perhaps the most helpful approach to contemporary attitudes would be for us to consider medieval texts where authors actually give their own opinion of this issue.

Unfortunately, there are very few written sources contemporary with the crusades in which medieval authors give their opinion on the ethics of torture. Even if there were, the views given may have been very different depending upon whether they came from a noble,

⁴⁶ Friedman, *Encounters Between Enemies*, 126.

a cleric, a lawyer or a prisoner. The one author from the Latin East who can help us with this question is Walter the Chancellor in *The Antiochene Wars*.⁴⁷ He was a cleric, but he wrote over a century before torture became formally incorporated into canon-law procedure in Europe (1252).⁴⁸ In consequence he would not have been obliged to support its use merely because the church did. Furthermore, he might well give us a different view to those of the many clerics who lived their entire adult lives within the confines of monasteries and abbeys and never saw any torture. Walter is rather special as he was an eyewitness to the particularly unpleasant tortures employed by Il-Ghazi in Aleppo in 1119. He did not specify whether or not he himself was tortured, but it is possible. At the end of the section where he described the torture of the captives from Antioch, he adds an illuminating passage:

Since kings, princes and other powerful people of the world, and even the powerless men of the same condition and of the same faith as these men were themselves, inflict many different punishments on their prisoners to exhort money when they capture them justly and when they capture them unjustly, and since nearly all kinds of mortals, inspired by the devil, are accustomed to take their examples rather from evil than from good things, I think it is better for me to keep quiet about the kind and quantity of their tortures than to express them, lest Christians hearing this bring the same to bear on Christians and turn them into accustomed usage.⁴⁹

A number of points can be inferred from the words Walter chose to use. The fact that Walter refrains from mentioning the most severe forms of torture, so that Christians should not use the techniques on each other in Europe, is fascinating. Firstly, it suggests that he has only told us about the less unpleasant tortures used, and most modern readers would agree that he did allow himself to mention some fairly nasty techniques for causing pain and suffering. He seems to have a high threshold for classing a torture as particularly nasty and so not to be mentioned in detail. It also suggests that he was aware that at least some kinds of torture were taking place in Europe early in the twelfth century, or else it would not matter who heard

⁴⁷ Walter the Chancellor, *Bella Antiochena*, 91–4; Walter the Chancellor, *The Antiochene Wars*, 132–6.

⁴⁸ Langbein, *Torture*, 7.

⁴⁹ Walter the Chancellor, *The Antiochene Wars*, 165.

about the techniques used in Aleppo. Thirdly, and most relevant to our question of the ethics of torture, it shows that he personally does not believe that the most unpleasant techniques should be used on other Christians. It is not clear whether he was against the use of any kind of torture in any circumstances, as the example he gave was the torture of captives rather than criminals. Neither does he comment as to whether he believed it reasonable to torture pagans. However, it is clear that he did not condone the use of really unpleasant tortures on other Christians. This suggests that he was worried that there was insufficient pressure on those in power in Europe to use only the level of torture that was regarded as necessary and acceptable by standards of the day. Furthermore, he implies that those in positions of power in Europe who were employing torture were evil and inspired by the devil. He does not mince his words. Walter seems to have been worried by the use of the more unpleasant forms of torture in Europe and clearly thought them inappropriate, unnecessary and evil.

Conclusion

In this investigation of torture in the crusades a number of points have become apparent. With regards to who was employing torture, it seems that all cultural, religious and military groups employed it, right from the start of the First Crusade to the close of the crusader period. It was not an activity adopted by one side in response to its use by the other. A captive's sharing of a religion with those in power gave no protection against torture. Christians tortured other Christians, both within the legal framework and also outside it. As to why torture was performed, a wide variety of reasons have come to light. These ranged from obtaining military tactics and information, increasing the agreed value of a ransom, ensuring the transfer of castles or property, demoralizing relatives or comrades who were still free, a macabre entertainment for a victor, a way to vent a commander's frustration or anger, and obtaining a confession in the judicial process. Many of these reasons are still just as applicable to modern cases of torture in unruly parts of the world today.

Techniques described include those borrowed from warfare, those more at home in a butcher's shop or surgeon's operating table, and those specifically designed for torture in prisons and castles. Approaches

borrowed from the battlefield include target practice with arrow or lance and amputation of limbs with a sword. Techniques borrowed from surgery or a butcher's shop include dismemberment, pulling of teeth and flaying of the skin. Use of torture devices mentioned include suspending captives in a gibbet, whipping on a pillory, tight cords that may have caused compartment syndrome, the rack to stretch a prisoner and the bernicles to crush the legs.

The attitudes of people to the use of torture at the time of the crusades is poorly understood, as few personal views have come to the attention of modern scholars. However, there is some evidence for concern that torture was overused in Europe and that unnecessarily harsh methods of torture were inappropriate for use by Christians on other Christians. If such tortures really were used on a regular basis by those in power at the time, then it might be expected that a small but significant proportion of the population of the Latin East may have suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, disability or disfigurement of some kind.

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HOLY WAR, ROYAL WIVES, AND EQUIVOCATION IN TWELFTH-CENTURY JERUSALEM

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It is not always easy to apply gender theory to medieval society. Several decades ago, theorists established clear links between sex, race, and class in social constructions of gender, usually with the latter two elements in supporting rather than starring roles. But this triangle in its usual configuration does not fully work for the Middle Ages in Europe. First, religious affiliation gives the triangle a fourth side. Second, gender sometimes takes a back seat to ethnicity, social status, and religious identification for a given person or group.² At the very least, these other components complicate matters in the extreme. Just as medieval political culture revolves around questions of competing jurisdictions, these four elements “compete” in medieval gender constructions and understandings of alterity or Otherness. Their relationship depended on context, so simplistic statements such as “all medieval women were second-class citizens compared to men” fail to uncover the reality. Thus case studies of various segments within medieval society can best uncover the many nuances of gender construction. And context is crucial to this process. For example,

¹ I owe thanks to several people for their support on this project: Niall Christie, who commented on the first incarnation of this paper in 1999; Helen Nicholson, whose request for a synthesis of gender theory in crusades studies caused me to look in entirely new and fruitful directions; Karen Manners Smith, whose initial loan of some crucial works on feminism helped me walk through the door that Helen Nicholson opened; Cindy Wilcox, who kindly agreed to read an article completely unrelated to her own thesis research, and whose comments helped me fine-tune several points; finally, the participants in the British Academy colloquium on English political culture, whose discussion helped me clarify several points.

² See, for example, Jacqueline de Weever, *Sheba's Daughters: Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic* (New York: Garland, 1998); Kimberly A. LoPrete, “The Gender of Lordly Women: The Case of Adela of Blois” in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women: Pawns or Players*, ed. Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003); Louise Mirrer, *Women, Jews and Muslims in the Texts of Reconquest Castile* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996) and “Representing ‘Other’ Men: Muslims, Jews, and Masculine Ideals in Medieval Castilian Epic and Ballad” in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

queens occupied a unique place within the medieval world, both within political circles and within what we might call the circle of all medieval women. Recent studies have suggested that at some level, queens overcame the limitations of their biology through the virtue of their elevated social rank. They could shape court life and royal identity. However, this pattern presupposes queens who were Roman Catholic and European in ancestry. It falls apart in the First Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1187). There women who married royal males played very little role in fashioning royal identity, because their ethnicity and religious affiliation worked against them. These elements greatly outweighed the queens' gender and indeed almost negated their royal status, for the consorts are barely perceptible either in their own activities or in the ways court sources "used" them. These women scarcely featured in the construction of rulership unless they could affect holy war in some way.

On one level, such a phenomenon is not surprising. Royal identity in the First Kingdom included multiple themes, several of which created paradoxes for kings and all of which marginalized their consorts. Most noticeably, court propagandists constructed rulership around holy war. In so doing, they repeated and reinforced many of the medieval West's assumptions about status, gender, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. They trained a spotlight on the king and his ability to wage successful holy war, which simultaneously drew upon the exclusionary nature of crusading and provided a pitfall by being too inclusive. They utilized other members of the royal family to heighten this identity, again with holy war as their primary focus. However, they effectively ignored or at least barely noticed females who married into the royal family, because consort queens rarely met the West's criteria delineating who could properly wage holy war.

Royal identity—the elaboration of attributes that set ruler apart from ruled—was not the product of Jerusalem alone. Throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, many upstarts and conquerors established themselves as kings in name; then court circles creatively justified their positions through a variety of media.³ These sources

³ Most research dealing with kingship touches on royal identity only tangentially, for historians tend to explore either theories of rulership or how it actually operated within a particular kingdom. France has garnered the most attention in terms of identity, probably because it had the most sophisticated and organized court circle propagandists. The bibliography supplies references.

indicated what the writer or artist thought kingship should be or what he wanted it to be, drawing on theories about rulership. At the same time, propagandists often responded to actual circumstances, demonstrating how the ruler fulfilled his duties. Thus the propagandists who crafted royal identity operated in a sphere that combined the ideal and the real. They did not simply want to "tell it like it is" or to repeat contemporary theories of good rulership. They wanted to do both. So they intertwined the two themes, showing how a king fulfilled medieval ideals of rulership in his actions. This approach could best legitimize a new ruler who did not necessarily carry royal blood in his veins.

Certainly male rulers in Jerusalem had to work under a hereditary handicap: the first three came from noble families. But Jerusalem's kings also had some definite advantages over their counterparts back in Europe. They established a realm that had no tradition of Latin Christian kingship, so their court had the opportunity to shape identity from the ground up. They also ruled the most prestigious and spiritually significant place in the world to western Christians, for the Holy Land itself was a relic.⁴ The chronicles they commissioned, the charters they issued, the laws they promulgated, and the art they patronized all presented a royal identity aimed at the Latin Christian population of the First Kingdom. Not surprisingly, this identity emphasized the ruler's obligation to wage holy war in whatever way possible.

And here we see the pitfalls of royal identity in Jerusalem. As I have argued elsewhere, every Roman Catholic throughout Christendom bore a responsibility to defend the faith, either by taking the cross for a short-term crusade or by engaging in the perpetual holy war that would keep the Crusader States in Christian hands. This supposedly royal identity did not really set rulers apart from their subjects, for it was not unique to the royal family. Furthermore, a ruler who lost territory had obviously forfeited God's favor and might endanger all the Crusader States. Court chroniclers such as Fulcher of Chartres and William of Tyre readily jettisoned the royal line if it could not provide effective holy warriors, for they cared more about preserving the kingdom.⁵

⁴ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 21 and "Peace Never Established: The Case of the Kingdom of Jerusalem," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 28 (1978): 87–102.

⁵ Deborah Gerish, "Shaping the Crown of Gold: Constructions of Royal Identity

Moreover, while a royal identity resting upon holy war could be overly inclusive in some respects, it also limited participation based on religious affiliation, ethnicity, gender, and rank. Urban II's initial plan of fighting for the faith required an army of Roman Catholic, European, and male nobles. Obviously Orthodox churches of the East had failed to hold on to the Holy Land. Women and perhaps men of lesser rank would not be able to fight effectively.⁶ These stipulations continued even after the larger crusading movement distinguished crusade from holy war: once the First Crusade established the Crusader States, the Franks were supposed to wage an ongoing, continual holy war that ideally would be punctuated by short-term campaigns (crusades) or brief visits from western crusaders who would fight and then return home. Although Byzantium played a role in the actual process of holy war,⁷ official theology produced by the Roman Catholic Church seems to have made no place for Greek aid. Even the European community within the Crusader States associated holy war with westernness, masculinity, and religious affiliation: wherever the crusaders came from before they traveled east, they forged a new origin myth founded in the First Crusade. Some Orthodox and even Muslim easterners could be assimilated into this origin myth if they fought on the side of the holy warriors. However, converts who later betrayed Christians did not share in it.⁸ By exten-

in the First Kingdom of Jerusalem" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1999).

⁶ Among the four earliest writers who recounted Urban II's sermon at Clermont, only Fulcher of Chartres seemed to feel that neither rank nor gender should limit participation. Other reporters either avoided the issue or clearly excluded women and lesser men. Niall Christie and Deborah Gerish, "Parallel Preachings: Urban II and al-Sulami," *Al-Masaq* 15 (2003): 139–48; Christopher Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Penny Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy, 1991), 8–10; H. E. J. Cowdrey, "The Genesis of the Crusades: The Springs of Western Ideas of Holy War," in *The Holy War*, ed. Thomas Patrick Murphy (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, 1976) and "The Peace and Truce of God in the Eleventh Century," *Past & Present* 46 (1970): 42–67; Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); John Gilchrist, "The Erdmann Thesis and the Canon Law, 1083–1114," in *Crusade and Settlement*, ed. Peter W. Edbury (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1985); D. C. Munro, "The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095," *American Historical Review* (1906): 231–42; Riley-Smith, *First Crusade*, 135; I. S. Robinson, "Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ," *History* 58 (1973): 177–84.

⁷ Ralph-Johannes Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States, 1096–1204* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Jonathan Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land: Relations between the Latin East and the West, 1119–1187* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

⁸ Alan V. Murray, "Ethnic Identity in the Crusader States: The Frankish Race

sion, women (who could not fully participate in the gendered activity of fighting) would not either. All these trends reinforced the exclusionary nature of holy warfare. Only western males actually fought successfully against Islam to defend Christian interests; at best, females and easterners played supporting roles.⁹

Since these ideas ran rampant throughout medieval European society, it is not surprising that court propagandists in Jerusalem incorporated them into royal identity. Men born into the dynasty bore the primary responsibility for waging holy war, as indicated above. Their daughters reinforced the dynastic element of royal identity, especially when male heirs were scarce (as they so often were).¹⁰ As I shall argue in a future project, daughters who became queens regnant, such as Melisende, demonstrated that women could enhance royal identity by preserving the bloodline and contributing to holy war in suitably feminine ways. Despite the fact that several princesses had non-European mothers, sources recognized them as European rather than Armenian or Greek.¹¹ In other words, blood members of the dynasty had the necessary social status, ethnicity, and religious affiliation; for court propagandists, the best ones also served holy war in gender-appropriate ways, but gender did not preclude royal daughters making contributions to royal identity.

Males who married into this family also possessed the proper status, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. Because these consorts waged war, they could become highly visible in the kingdom and thus in the formation of royal identity. Once crowned, male consorts did well

and the Settlement of Outremer," in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson, and Alan V. Murray (Leeds: Leeds Texts and Monographs, 1995).

⁹ Marc Carrier, "Perfidious and Effeminate Greeks: The Representation of Byzantine Ceremonial in the Western Chronicles of the Crusades (1096–1204)," *Annuario dell'Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica Venezia* 4 (2002): 47–68; Sarah Lambert, "Crusading or Spinning?" in *Gendering the Crusades*, ed. Susan B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001).

¹⁰ James A. Brundage, "Marriage Law in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem*, ed. Hans Eberhard Mayer, Benjamin Z. Kedar, and R. C. Smail (Jerusalem: Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982), 77, notes that female fief-holders rendered service of the body, like male fief-holders, for women served their lords through marriage. The same seems to be true of princesses. Also see Sarah Lambert, "Queen or Consort: Rulership and Politics in the Latin East, 1118–1228," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1997).

¹¹ Deborah Gerish, "Melisende Progenitrix," in progress.

to allow their wives some role in government, and in the Second Kingdom they had to deal with the barons who chose the princess' husband. Otherwise male consorts and royal sons differed little. In addition, men who married into the family came from Europe. The transplanted Latin culture of the Levant would have been largely familiar to them. Thus *all* males of the royal family, however they became members thereof, could meet the requirements of royal identity.

Female consorts, however, usually came from the East, so they did not share the language, religion, or culture of their husbands and their husbands' most important subjects. Female consorts did not create or fill any public office. They could not contribute to the dynasty unless they produced heirs (something only two of them managed). Nor could they advance holy war by taking the field. Court sources referred to them in two ways only. First, consorts indirectly participated in holy war by bringing military or diplomatic resources into the kingdom, which were praiseworthy endeavors. Second, they could have a positive or negative impact on the throne's prestige through their family connections and sexual behavior. Unless such women could further holy war, they barely featured in the construction of rulership, because despite their nominal royal status, they typically combined the other three "faults": being female, eastern, and Orthodox. While royal daughters could overcome the handicap of gender, royal wives could not.

This explains why so few sources discuss consorts. Obviously these marriages provided new military resources or cemented local alliances. Once married, however, female consorts in Jerusalem probably had no official role. They left almost no impression on the documentary record, nor do they seem to have patronized ecclesiastical institutions, so they are barely perceptible in non-narrative sources. And the same principle applies to narratives. Fulcher of Chartres and William of Tyre, the two most important chroniclers of the First Kingdom, say little about these women. Thus even if these consorts wielded a great deal of influence *in reality*—which seems unlikely—court chroniclers and chancery personnel did not really exploit them to construct kingship or shape royal identity. Ethnicity and religious affiliation, even more than gender, worked against these women's positions as royal consorts. While arguments from silence can be dangerous because it is so difficult to prove a negative, here the silence is deafening.

However, there are variations in the volume level, attuned to the different situations of these women. Four themes appear in the sources, receiving differential treatment based on the source genre and writer. Any consort's disposition of property, mentioned generally in only the documentary sources, received neither praise nor criticism. Fulcher of Chartres or William of Tyre consistently praised any consort's indirect participation in holy war. Yet the chroniclers equivocated about consorts' actions in other spheres: their comments on a consort's participation in state affairs could be neutral to negative, and references to female sexuality never flattered royal identity unless blame could be laid at the king's door.¹²

Consorts included the Armenian noblewomen Arda, second wife of Baldwin I, and Morphia, who married Baldwin of Bourcq while he was count of Edessa; Countess Adelaide of Sicily, Baldwin I's third wife; and the Byzantine princesses Theodora, wife of Baldwin III, and Maria, whom Amalric married after he took the throne. Amalric's first wife, Agnes of Courtenay, divorced Amalric as a condition of his accession, but as queen mother to Baldwin IV and Sibylla she occupied a position similar to that of the consorts. The three earliest consorts (Arda, Adelaide, and Morphia) are the most obscure and the Greek princesses the least. My discussion of each consort will first explore what little we know about her actual activities, and then I will consider how chroniclers fit her into their construction of royal identity.

In reality, the first three consorts could have contributed a great deal to crusading and holy war through their connections. The two Armenian wives, Arda and Morphia, forged ties between their husbands and their families of origin. Baldwin I and Baldwin II married them shortly after they arrived in the East—long before their accessions—when alliances with local princes could be useful.¹³ Baldwin I's third wife, Adelaide of Sicily, similarly brought a dowry of ships,

¹² This assertion assumes that queens *could* exhibit moral honor. John Carmi Parsons has argued that chroniclers treated English kings and queens as a moral package, but the king rarely incurred censure for any sexual or reproductive failings. The queen did, however, because she had no honor of her own; see "'Loved Him—Hated Her': Honor and Shame at the Medieval Court" in *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West*, ed. Jacqueline Murray (New York: Garland, 1999), especially 285.

¹³ Joscelin I of Edessa, Baldwin II's first cousin and Agnes of Courtenay's grandfather, did the same.

money, and men to aid in the holy war. But sources concerning these women are extremely scarce. There is no indication that either of Baldwin I's wives went through a coronation ceremony.¹⁴ No one recorded the name of Baldwin I's second wife, traditionally known as Arda,¹⁵ or the death year of Baldwin II's queen, Morphia.¹⁶ None of these three women issued or even consented to charters, nor did any of them seem to possess a seal. Whatever these women did during their lifetimes, contemporary and later writers largely ignored them.

Arda's case is the worst in terms of sources; there is no documentary evidence and little narrative material about her. Even so, a pattern emerges: chroniclers approved when she could advance holy war, yet elsewhere they do not seem to have trusted this Eastern woman. For example, William of Tyre endorsed Baldwin I's marriage to her after he had become count of Edessa early in the crusade, for her father and uncle possessed strong castles and large armies in the region.¹⁷ Yet the other references do not reflect well on her or on the crown. During the first battle of Ramla in 1101, a messenger reported that the king had died, and Arda promptly sought assistance from Tancred, then regent of Antioch. Fulcher of Chartres referred to her only as *coniuge regis*, not queen, in his account.¹⁸ Although William of Tyre called her *regina* when he adapted the story from Fulcher, his use of the term may have been a mark of respect rather than a reflection of Arda's actual title. Furthermore, both chroniclers implied that Arda did not have the power to act alone: they mentioned the involvement of Jaffa's citizens in this decision. Fulcher cited a letter purportedly sent to Tancred, indicating that Arda and "a few citizens of the city" wrote it.¹⁹ William of Tyre's version had Arda and the citizens consulting with their elders:

¹⁴ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1913) 3.7.4; Hans Eberhard Mayer, "Das Pontifikale von Tyrus und die Krönung der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem, Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Forschung über Herrschaftszeichen und Staatsymbolik," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1967): 141–232, especially 150–57.

¹⁵ Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem*, ed. H. S. Fink (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1969), 162 n. 2.

¹⁶ Rudolf Hiestand, "Chronologisches zur Geschichte des Königsreichs Jerusalem um 1130," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 26 (1970): 220–29.

¹⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986), 10.1.

¹⁸ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia*, 2.14.

¹⁹ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia*, 2.14.

On hearing [the erroneous news of Baldwin I's death], the citizens and the queen, who was in the city, judging that what they had been told was true, gave themselves over to lamentations and when they had taken counsel with the elders and experienced men of greater understanding, they believed their only remedy was to send to the lord Tancred, prince of the Antiochenes, that he might hasten to relieve the danger to the realm and the destitution by his guidance, because all the people of the faithful placed their hope in him, after God.²⁰

Perhaps William only intended to show Arda's wisdom in conferring with wiser heads, but the ambiguity of this incident did not show her as a queen with distinct powers or even any talent for decisive action. Here city elders acted as the real leaders.

The only other reference to Arda portrayed her in an even more unflattering light by accusing her of sexual misconduct. While Fulcher said nothing about her separation from the king around 1104, William of Tyre reported that Baldwin I had put her away in a convent and that she later became a prostitute in Constantinople.²¹ He could not say whether Arda had committed adultery or whether Baldwin I hoped to procure a wealthier wife. William's hedging reveals that to him, Arda's importance lay in her ability or inability to aid the war effort. Though aware that the charge of infidelity might have been a cover-up, he told the tale anyway. In this context, her supposed life of prostitution provided an unimpeachable excuse—perhaps even outweighing the financial demands of holy war—for Baldwin I's actions. Whatever factors influenced the king's decision, his wife's later behavior proved that he had been right. Moreover, this passage hints that in William's mind, eastern women could be even more lustful than their western counterparts.

Arda's treatment in the sources contrasts in several ways with that of her immediate successor, Adelaide of Sicily. Adelaide's tenure as royal consort is also poorly documented, in part because Baldwin I married her bigamously. She was the only female consort to come from Europe, and her contribution of ships and men was crucial to the war effort in Jerusalem. But her marriage to Baldwin I raised the possibility that her son Roger the Great would succeed to the throne of Jerusalem. It may well be that the twelfth-century kings of Jerusalem looked to the East for wives in part to avoid a European claim to the throne.

²⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 10.18.

²¹ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 11.1.

Yet whatever else Adelaide did or did not do, the chroniclers treated her much more kindly when they did bother to mention her. Fulcher said almost nothing about the marriage, for he disapproved of Baldwin I's bigamy.²² He referred to Adelaide once as *regina*, but more often called her *comitissa*. William of Tyre gave the details of the marriage settlement, including the fact that Baldwin I would have offered any concession necessary to gain the naval resources Adelaide could supply.²³ Again, we can see that the consort's contribution to royal identity was limited to furthering the holy war. More revealingly, the chroniclers did not blame her for any negative impact on royal identity. Fulcher chided the king for marrying bigamously, describing the king's serious illness and his subsequent contrition that led to Adelaide's dismissal. William accused Arnulf, patriarch of Jerusalem, of deceiving an innocent woman, so that God withheld children from the royal couple. Thus in both narratives, God warned the realm that sin and holy war could not coexist. But in this case of a European consort, it was not the woman who committed the sin, whereas Arda came in for censure.

The next female consort, Morphia, was another Armenian Christian whose reign was not well documented. She married Baldwin II around 1103, some fifteen years before his accession. Fulcher of Chartres mentioned that she was crowned with her husband on Christmas Day of 1119.²⁴ William of Tyre explained that she was the daughter of the northern Syrian warlord, Gabriel of Melitene, and that Baldwin desperately needed the large dowry she provided.²⁵ William mentioned Morphia again in his thumbnail sketch of Baldwin II, but he did *not* say that she joined in her husband's coronation.²⁶ The chroniclers referred to her nowhere else. Like her predecessors, Morphia left no charters, nor did she consent to any of the surviving royal *acta*.

However, two posthumous references to this consort suggest a growing awareness of royal identity at court. After Morphia's death, Baldwin II issued charters for the benefit of her soul, and in them

²² Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia*, 2.51, 2.59, 2.60.

²³ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 11.21. He called Adelaide *regina* in 11.29.

²⁴ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia*, 3.7.4.

²⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 10.24.

²⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 12.4.

he called her queen.²⁷ Her burial site at St. Mary of the Jehosaphat Valley also reflected well on the crown, for the monastery housed the tomb of the Virgin Mary, the Queen of Heaven. Nonetheless, this site separated queens from kings, for kings were buried in the Holy Sepulcher. Morphia's daughter Melisende was also entombed at St. Mary's rather than at the Holy Sepulcher, even though Melisende had been a queen regnant.²⁸

Because Melisende was a royal daughter rather than a consort, the remarks I will offer here are few. Based on the evidence given above, it is unlikely that Melisende had any real models of queenship to follow. There was no office for her to step into; Melisende seems to have been the first royal woman to possess a seal.²⁹ She would have had no experience of women in power. Nor had court writers really used her predecessors to fashion a royal identity. Melisende's reign gave her unprecedented power both during and after her husband's lifetime. She also patronized religious houses and religious art to an extent not seen before. As a royal heir, a queen regnant, and a regent, Melisende was in a position to enhance the prestige of the throne and to shape royal identity. She did so in her own actions, and William of Tyre presented her in a flattering light, even if in reality her actions had a negative impact on the realm.³⁰

The next two consort queens did not continue Melisende's activities. As with the earlier consorts, there are few indications that either Theodora or Maria Comnena had much to do with government during their husbands' reigns. Thus while Melisende had exercised a great deal of power, she did not create a public role that was open to later consort queens. Bernard Hamilton has suggested that Baldwin III and Amalric, having lived through Melisende's reign, were reluctant to allow their wives a voice in government.³¹ It seems

²⁷ Reinhold Röhricht, *Regesta regni hierosolymitani* and *Additamentum* (1893; reprint New York: AMS Press, 1960) [hereafter RRH] nos. 121, 125, 137.

²⁸ Jaroslav Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 113 and 516 nn. 133, 134.

²⁹ Hans Eberhard Mayer, *Das Siegelwesen in den Kreuzfahrerstaaten* (Munich: Abhandlung der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 1978), 37.

³⁰ Hans Eberhard Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972): 95–182.

³¹ Bernard Hamilton, "Women in the Crusader States: The Queens of Jerusalem," in *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 158.

highly likely that the Greek queens' ethnicity and religious affiliation worked against them as well. Even if they converted to Roman Catholicism, as Hans Eberhard Mayer has suggested,³² court writers made no mention of the fact, nor did they make any effort to emphasize queenly piety.

Again, kings chose these Greek wives to advance holy war. Marriages between Baldwin III and Theodora, then between Amalric and Maria, helped solidify ties between Constantinople and Jerusalem. These women also brought prestige to the Latin Kingdom, for the Latin East venerated Byzantine artistic ideals.³³ If Greek aesthetics represented the epitome of culture in Jerusalem, Greek queens could only reflect well on the court. Nevertheless, these marriages came about in a specific context. Both Baldwin III and Amalric married when they hoped to gain Byzantine support for their Egyptian campaigns. In particular, Amalric's adoption of imperial clothing styles at his court must be viewed in the same light as his marriage to Maria: these actions represented his desire for closeness with Constantinople, not necessarily the influence of his queen.³⁴

We can, however, see somewhat more recognition of the queens in narrative and documentary sources. William of Tyre described their coronations and weddings; curiously, the Greek consorts were crowned before their weddings, which differed from western practice.³⁵ William's discussion of the nuptials enumerated how much money Manuel Comnenus spent on Theodora's dowry and wedding preparations, which in turn heightened Baldwin III's majesty.³⁶ Thus for William, Theodora served two purposes in the context of holy war: she cemented an alliance that could help the Crusader States, and her father's expenditures heightened Baldwin III's prestige, which in turn would help the king retain his position at the peak of Frankish society.

³² Hans Eberhard Mayer, *Bistümer, Klöster und Stifte in Königreich Jerusalem* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1977), 257.

³³ Folda, *Art of the Crusaders*, 478.

³⁴ Folda, *Art of the Crusaders*, 347.

³⁵ Marion F. Facinger, "A Study of Medieval Queenship: Capetian France, 987–1237," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 5 (1968): 17–20.

³⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 18.32: Manuel spent 10,000 hyperpers on the wedding itself and 14,000 on Theodora's dress. Her dowry was 100,000 hyperpers. William's detailed account of the monies involved suggests that these were not small sums, for the hyperper was a gold or silver coin.

Theodora also appeared in several charters. In exchange for her large dowry, Queen Theodora received the city of Acre as her marriage portion. This allowed her a say in Baldwin III's dispositions regarding the city, and he noted her consent in one charter concerning Acre.³⁷ Theodora issued her own charter donating a house to her porter; the context suggests that this house was in Acre.³⁸ Another royal transaction involving the castle of Montreal noted the consent of Theodora, Baldwin III's brother Amalric, and some of their cousins.³⁹ In addition, Theodora possessed her own seal.⁴⁰ Yet these references do not shed much light on the queen's activities, and their tiny number dates from the best-preserved era of the royal chancery.

Furthermore, William of Tyre related a scurrilous anecdote about her post-regnal career. Once widowed, Theodora resided in Acre. When her kinsman Andronicus paid a visit, the two ran off and resided in Muslim lands as husband and wife.⁴¹ In reality, Theodora's departure from the Kingdom of Jerusalem averted any subsequent remarriage within the realm, which could have removed the city of Acre from royal control. In that sense, her actions benefited the crown. Yet William of Tyre repeated a story that could not possibly have benefited royal prestige. Like the story of Arda's prostitution, it alluded to the unbridled sexuality of eastern women. And both these consorts failed to provide royal children. William obliquely (perhaps unintentionally) placed the blame on these two eastern consorts.

Maria Comnena's queenship and widowhood were rather different. She too underwent coronation and wedding ceremonies filled with magnificent displays of wealth and royal majesty,⁴² but William of Tyre said nothing more of her until after Amalric's death. Maria retired to Nablus, her marriage portion, with her daughter Isabella.⁴³ Baldwin IV later gave her permission to marry Balian of Ibelin, who enjoyed the usufruct of the city during Maria's lifetime.⁴⁴ Thus the

³⁷ RRH no. 344.

³⁸ RRH no. 367.

³⁹ RRH nos. 344, 366.

⁴⁰ Mayer, *Das Siegelwesen*, 37.

⁴¹ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 20.2, 21.13.

⁴² William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 20.1.

⁴³ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 21.15, 21.18.

⁴⁴ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 21.18.

former queen was treated like any other widow of property in the First Kingdom—she needed her lord's consent to remarry, and indeed may have been required to remarry if she wished to keep her fief.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, Maria retained her royal title and her authority in matters pertaining to Nablus. When Viscount Amalric of Nablus sold his Bedouins to the Hospitallers, he noted the consent of, first, King Baldwin IV, then of “the famous queen” Maria, and lastly of Balian, then lord of Nablus.⁴⁶ Balian's charter donating some land to the Hospitallers twice mentioned Maria's consent and her royal title.⁴⁷ Finally, King Baldwin IV's charter of 1182, issued to his uncle Joscelin III of Edessa, mentioned Maria's usufruct of certain lands (without explaining why or how the queen mother had obtained such a right): here she is called “lady Maria, former queen of the Jerusalemites.”⁴⁸ Thus the documentary evidence, along with Maria's well-known involvement in power struggles concerning the succession to Baldwin IV, suggests that she wielded more political power as Isabella's mother than she had as Amalric's queen.⁴⁹ William of Tyre almost certainly saw the situation in that way, given his silence about her during Amalric's lifetime.

The same can be said of Agnes, Amalric's first wife. Since they divorced before his accession, Agnes never took any royal title, and her influence at court dates from Baldwin IV's reign.⁵⁰ Yet William of Tyre hardly mentioned her except in the context of her marriages. He discussed in great detail the relationship between Amalric and Agnes, then noted Agnes' subsequent remarriages (the second of which also had to be annulled because of consanguinity).⁵¹ He later referred to the royal divorce in discussing Baldwin IV's parentage.⁵² William gave Agnes some credit for helping free her brother, Joscelin III of Edessa, from captivity in 1176.⁵³ He castigated Agnes for

⁴⁵ Brundage, “Marriage Law,” 267–70.

⁴⁶ RRH no. 567.

⁴⁷ RRH no. 597.

⁴⁸ RRH no. 614.

⁴⁹ Bernard Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs: Baldwin IV and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1174–1277* (Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1973), 101–16.

⁵⁰ Hamilton, *The Leper King*.

⁵¹ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 19.4.

⁵² William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 21.1.

⁵³ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 21.11.

turning Baldwin IV's mind against Raymond III of Tripoli, naming her among those who tried to use the king's illness to their own advantage.⁵⁴ Finally, he indicated that when Baldwin IV named Guy of Lusignan as his regent in 1183, Agnes and the patriarch of Jerusalem were present.⁵⁵ Except for one minor outburst, William simply reported on Agnes' behavior without any judgments. But given the level of influence Agnes enjoyed at the royal court, the chronicler may have chosen the best weapon at all—he generally kept quiet about the queen mother and her impact on state matters. This silence may reflect only personal dislike, yet Agnes' ethnicity (her grandmother had been Armenian) may have supplied another reason for William's treatment: eastern women simply could not be trusted in positions of leadership.⁵⁶

To summarize, then, we can see that female consorts were most visible when they could affect holy war through their family connections, their dowries, and their lands. Otherwise they had no official role in the kingdom, unless the records that have survived are skewed beyond belief. Female consorts thus had little positive impact on the construction of kingship until the latter half of the twelfth century, when they could heighten the prestige of the crown through their imperial connections. And even then, a consort's sexual misbehavior demonstrated her otherness: the king had married an outsider who could not conform to western standards of morality.⁵⁷

These conclusions raise a crucial question about the number and type of records that have survived: do the differences posited between the earliest consorts and the later queens stem from a larger body of records in the second half of the century? Or might they arise

⁵⁴ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 22.10.

⁵⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, 22.25; Peter W. Edbury, "Propaganda and Faction in the Kingdom of Jerusalem: The Background to Hattin," in his *Kingdoms of the Crusaders: From Jerusalem to Cyprus* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1999).

⁵⁶ If William was influenced by Agnes' Armenian ethnicity, he may have kept silent to protect the royal claims of her children, Baldwin IV and Sibylla. Also see Bernard Hamilton, "The Titular Nobility of the Latin East: The Case of Agnes of Courtenay," in *Crusade and Settlement*, ed. Peter W. Edbury (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1985); Hans Eberhard Mayer, "The Beginnings of King Amalric of Jerusalem," in *The Horns of Hattin*, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar (London: Variorum, 1992) and "Die Legitimität Balduins IV. von Jerusalem und das Testament der Agnes von Courtenay," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 108 (1988): 63–89.

⁵⁷ Compare with Eleanor of Castile's reputation in England: Parsons, "'Loved Him—Hated Her.'"

out of the different perspectives of the two key chroniclers, Fulcher of Chartres and William of Tyre? Both men cared greatly about defending the Latin East, to the extent that in their histories the needs of holy war sometimes overrode the needs of the throne. Since Fulcher in particular focused on holy war, his silence about the consorts is not out of character. William had more to work with when it came to royal identity; he also defended the dynasty passionately. Yet even for William, female consorts factored into royal identity only when the women affected royal prestige and holy war. And his personal judgments on their actions indicate an ambivalence about them that did not extend to all women in potentially authoritative positions of power.

Regarding the survival of documentation, there is no denying that more evidence survives from the later years of the kingdom, but the silence of one source in particular supports my argument that consorts had little involvement in public matters. This Armenian narrative, started by Matthew of Edessa and continued by Gregory the Priest, had a great deal to say about the affairs of Latins and Armenians. Both men drew upon their own experience when dealing with the twelfth century: Matthew's portion of the chronicle covered the years from 1101 to 1136, and Gregory continued it up to 1162. Yet Matthew never mentioned Baldwin I's wife Arda. All he said of Morphia was that she and Joscelin I of Edessa negotiated ransom terms when the king was captured in 1123.⁵⁸ However, Gregory provided a number of details about Baldwin III's marriage to the Greek Princess Theodora. It is difficult to believe that these Armenian writers would have ignored Arda and Morphia if these women had exercised political power.⁵⁹ It is also easy to believe that Theodora carried imperial prestige into Jerusalem's court upon her marriage.

The highly restricted narrative treatment of Jerusalem's consort queens contrasts markedly with queenly representations from other medieval European realms. My point is not that medieval queens exercised power, but that court sources could and did draw upon queenly roles to construct kingship and shape royal identity. For this enquiry, *representations* of their activities are much more useful than

⁵⁸ Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, ed. Ara Edmond Dostourian (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993), 3.96.

⁵⁹ Matthew of Edessa, 1–16.

what queens actually did. In the heart of Europe, a queen could wield influence because she had access to the king as his wife. However, as royal consort, she was also part of the *curia regis*, which allowed her something of a voice in government.⁶⁰ The latter role became increasingly formalized and institutionalized in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, to the extent that coronation prayers mentioned the queen's governmental duties along with the more traditional exhortations about piety and fertility.⁶¹

The female consort's effect on Capetian royal identity was dramatic indeed. Luchaire described the trio of king, *rex designatus*, and queen as a Capetian trinity, though he may have overstated the case.⁶² All three shared a sacred character not available to other members of the family.⁶³ The fact that queens were buried alongside their husbands at St-Denis reinforces this point.⁶⁴ Female consorts also heightened the prestige of the monarchy through their much-touted Carolingian descent.⁶⁵ Thus in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Capetian queens played a prominent role in the construction of kingship. The most obvious example is Adelaide of Maurienne, wife of Louis VI. Andrew Lewis has argued that Louis VI consolidated his hold on the throne, and the increasingly vertical nature of the dynasty, through the anticipatory association of his two sons and through emphasis on the role of his queen.⁶⁶

Nor did English queens retire into the background. Recent scholarship shows that they served institutional as well as ceremonial functions in pre- and post-Conquest England.⁶⁷ As the Norman kings worked

⁶⁰ P. S. Barnwell, *Kings, Courtiers, and Imperium: The Barbarian West, 565–725* (London: Duckworth, 1997); Lois L. Huneycutt, "'Another Esther in Our Times': Matilda II and the Formation of a Queenly Ideal in Anglo-Norman England" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1992); Facinger, "Study of Medieval Queenship."

⁶¹ Huneycutt, "'Another Esther,'" 46–48.

⁶² Achille Luchaire, *Histoire des institutions monarchiques sous les premiers Capétiens*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Auguste Picard, 1891), 133; W. M. Newman, *The Kings, the Court, and the Royal Power in France in the Eleventh Century* (Toulouse: Imprimerie Henri Cléder, 1929), 50.

⁶³ Newman, *The Kings, the Court*, 55.

⁶⁴ Andrew W. Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 116.

⁶⁵ Lewis, *Royal Succession*, 106–16.

⁶⁶ Lewis, *Royal Succession*, 55–59.

⁶⁷ Huneycutt, "'Another Esther,'""; Amy Kelly, *Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950); Pauline Stafford, "The King's Wife in Wessex 800–1066," *Past and Present* 91 (1981): 3–27.

to administer their lands on both sides of the Channel, queens became even more important through serving as regents for their husbands. William the Conqueror's queen, Matilda I, governed his holdings in Normandy for some years.⁶⁸ Matilda II, first wife of Henry I, attended councils with her husband, was often the second witness to his charters, and on occasion acted as regent of England.⁶⁹ Eleanor of Aquitaine performed similar functions for her husband Henry II and for her son Richard I.⁷⁰

Even in a "new" kingdom such as the Sicilian *Regno*, queens could shape royal identity. Alexander of Telese, chronicler of Roger II, spoke favorably of Roger's mother, Adelaide of Sicily, who acted as regent during her son's minority,⁷¹ and of Roger's queen, Elvira of León-Castile, who donated many gifts to the Church during her lifetime.⁷²

Only in the Iberian kingdoms do we hear little about consorts, who rarely show up in court sources. There queens seem to have had no duties beyond childbearing, as Bernard Reilly indicates:

Always under the monarchy the essential function of a queen was to produce heirs. If she had a further role of influence at court, it must be as an extension of her personality and particular gifts, and the queens of Alfonso are simply unknown to us as persons. Of the six, historians have traditionally attributed significant influence only to Queen Constance, and that seems to have been a reflex of the literary development. Contemporaries did not mention it.⁷³

Consorts in Iberia and Jerusalem look much more like Mercian royal wives of an earlier period than queens in the twelfth century.⁷⁴ The pattern noted here indicates that kingdoms with more developed governmental institutions had more developed queenly roles, perhaps because queens could cloud the distinction between public and private. All queenly duties—continuation of the dynasty, access to the

⁶⁸ Hunneycutt, "Another Esther," 48–49.

⁶⁹ Hunneycutt, "Another Esther," 114–63.

⁷⁰ Kelly, *Eleanor*, 103, 110, 142, 152, 249.

⁷¹ Alexander of Telese, *Ystoria Rogerii regis Sicilie Calabrie atque Apulie*, ed. Ludovico de Nava (Rome: Nella sede dell'Istituto, 1991), 1.3.

⁷² Alexander of Telese 3.1.

⁷³ Bernard F. Reilly, *The Kingdom of Leon-Castilla under Alfonso VI, 1065–1109* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 279. Little work has been done on consort queens in Iberia, which limits the comparisons I can make with consorts of Jerusalem.

⁷⁴ Stafford, "The King's Wife."

king, public piety, and official governmental duties—blurred the line separating public and private activities.⁷⁵

But the context in Jerusalem required a different type of royal wife. Because holy war entailed military resources, money, and especially local alliances, kings of Jerusalem chose consorts who could serve their immediate needs, not the window-dressing purposes of court writers. Eastern consorts were not familiar with Latin customs and expectations. Nor did they practice Roman Catholicism, so that most common attribute of medieval queens—a reputation for piety—would only underscore their alienness.⁷⁶ In short, the consorts' ethnicity and religious affiliation determined how court chroniclers used them to construct kingship in the First Kingdom. When these women could not advance holy war, they receded from view and had little impact on royal identity.

Thus gender relations get something of a twist in Jerusalem, where the construction of rulership depended so heavily upon holy war. As always, women in the royal family were largely defined by reproductive functions. Yet because there were so few children, especially males, in the dynasty, consort queens failed to perform their primary duty. Princesses were much more important as transmitters of royal blood and kingworthiness. Even in more public obligations, daughters could outshine their mothers, for the gendering of holy war meant that men fought while women supported them with effective prayers—and presumably Roman Catholic prayers would prove more beneficial to a Roman Catholic state. In the end, since these royal wives met only one of the criteria for full participation in royal identity, it may be remarkable that they appeared as much as they did. If Fulcher of Chartres and William of Tyre had kept silent when they could not say anything nice, we may not have heard about these women at all.

⁷⁵ Dorothy O. Helly and Susan M. Reverby, eds. *Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

⁷⁶ John Carmi Parsons, "Piety, Power and the Reputations of Two Thirteenth-Century English Queens" in *Queens, Regents and Potentates*, ed. Theresa M. Vann (Dallas: Academia, 1993), notes a similar pattern for Eleanor of Castile, arguing that contemporary chronicles kept silent about her religious practices because they were too newfangled.

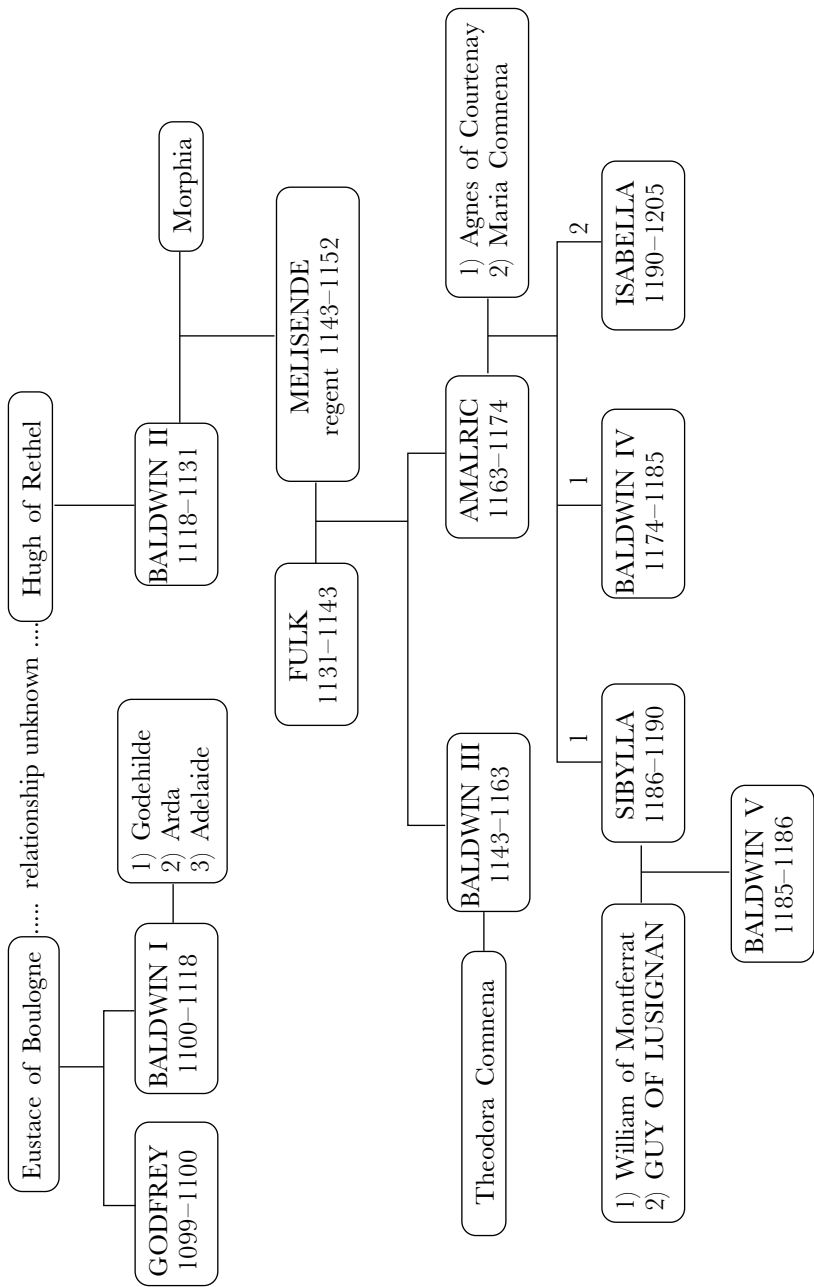


Fig. 1: Royal Family Relationships in the First Kingdom of Jerusalem

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ARMING THE ENEMY: NON-CHRISTIANS' ROLES IN
THE MILITARY CULTURE OF THE CROWN OF ARAGON
DURING THE *RECONQUISTA*

Paula R. Stiles

In the Christian takeover of Spain from the Muslims, which was mainly a territorial contest, there was also a distinct religious element, as demonstrated by the implications of the term *Reconquista* (“reconquest”). Religion was the great divider between the three main groups in Iberia—Muslims, Christians and Jews. It was the strongest element that the Iberians used to identify the differences between them and to establish group identities. But it was also divisive, with a strong potential for fostering violence between all three groups. To the Christians of Spain, their expansion south from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries was not a new conquest of Muslim lands but a reconquest of old Christian lands that the Muslims had taken from the Christian Visigothic kingdoms between 711 and 718. When the kings and nobles of the Iberian peninsula took territories from the Muslims, they saw this as a victory for the Christian faith and for God. The Muslims, equally, saw it as a great loss to Islam (and God) and fought vigorously to retain their territory. The transition from Muslim al-Andalus to Christian Spain and Portugal took seven centuries.

The military situation remained complex and fluid on both sides from the eleventh to the early fourteenth centuries. Christian rulers allied with Muslim rulers during the *taifa* period of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries against rival Christians or Muslims. Adventurers like the Cid even served Muslim rulers, like al-Mu'tamin in Zaragoza.¹ These were not local exceptions to a general rule. In fact, they sprang from basic attitudes and customs that Christians and Muslims on the Iberian peninsula shared. They were accepted parts of what was required of an inhabitant in both al-Andalus and Spanish Christian lands.

¹ Bernard F. Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain, 1031–1157* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 120–1.

In northeastern Iberia, the Kingdom of Aragon, the County of Catalonia, and later in the thirteenth century, in the Kingdom of Valencia, increasing numbers of non-Christians came under Christian rule. They also became increasingly integrated into the Christian military infrastructure. From 1137 onward, Catalonia's ruler, the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer IV, became king of Aragon as well, passing the title to his descendants. From then on, the County of Barcelona/Catalonia and the Kingdom of Aragon were joined under one count/king as the Crown of Aragon. The basic attitudes and royal policies toward non-Christians in Catalonia and Aragon were already in place by the time Ramon Berenguer's descendant, James I, conquered Valencia in 1238, but these continued to evolve into the fourteenth century.

In such a highly militarized society, polarized along religious lines, one would expect little cooperation and no alliances between Christian and non-Christian and the automatic expectation of strong military loyalties falling along religious lines. Certainly, religious minorities in Spain were regarded with suspicion during their coreligionists' periods of invasion, such as the North African Almoravids' and Almohads' attempts to take back Iberia for Islam during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This suspicion was not without foundation, as the Muslim sympathies often did lie with the invaders. In some areas even as far north as Novillas, on the border between Aragon and Navarre, the fear of Muslim revolt and reinvasion persisted for decades after the town's reconquest from the Muslims in 1119.² Barberà, north of Tarragona, had lost all of its Muslim population by the late twelfth century, but not before the Muslims had retaken the town in a raid, beheaded the defenders' leader and enslaved the survivors.³ Several major cities in Valencia revolted after their initial conquest by Christians in the 1240s, and the area was not effectively subdued until after a major Muslim revolt in 1277.⁴

² Ana Isabel Lapeña Paul, "Documentos de la encomienda templaria de Novillas (siglo XII)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Zaragoza, 1978), 107–8, doc. 63; Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Spain, Cód. 691, no. 79, fol. 29v.

³ Josep Maria Sans i Travé, *Col·lecció Diplomàtica de la Casa del Temple de Barberà (945–1212), Textos Jurídics Catalans, Documents I* (Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1997), doc. 14.

⁴ Robert I. Burns, *The Crusader Kingdom of Valencia: Reconstruction on a Thirteenth-Century Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 4.

Yet despite Christian fears, both justified and not, of internal enemies helping external foes, the opposite situation was also frequently the case in the Crown of Aragon from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries. Inhabitants of cities and towns, even those from minority religious groups in the Crown, had municipal identities that often superseded their strong religious and cultural identities, even in times of war. The concept of “*convivencia*”—a Castilian word meaning “life together” or “coexistence”—was a common ideal throughout both Christian and Muslim Iberia by this time that seemed especially strong in the Crown of Aragon.⁵ Its origins lay in the respect that Muslims paid to subject Christians and Jews in their own societies, “People of the Book” who came from the same monotheistic religious tradition as Islam. The Iberian Christians adopted it and adapted it to their less centralized culture in their dealings with newly subject non-Christians during their reconquest of the peninsula. The reality of this utopian ideal in either Muslim or Christian Spain is debatable, but both sides during this period understood the practical necessity for the three religions to live and work together while maintaining their separate, unique identities. They may have fought vociferously over which group would rule Iberian society, and some more bitter or fanatical individuals or groups may have advocated expulsion of conquered populations. In general, however, the cultural mindset of the Christian Aragonese and Catalonians during this period accepted the economic necessity of keeping these lucrative minority groups in place after conquering a territory, even when their loyalties were somewhat suspect.

But on the other side of this assumed right were assumed responsibilities, and some of these responsibilities were also military in nature. For the privilege of being allowed to stay in the Crown of Aragon, minority religious groups had to pay higher taxes to their new lords. Some taxes specific to non-Christian groups, such as the *sofra* tax on the Muslims, were military in nature. The term “*sofra*” could be either a labor tax (*azofra*)⁶ or a tax levied on wood intended for the maintenance of castles (*çofra*).⁷ In the case of the former, the

⁵ John Boswell, *The Royal Treasure: Muslim Communities under the Crown of Aragon in the Fourteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 397–400.

⁶ L. P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 143.

⁷ Boswell, *The Royal Treasure*, 510. This was an extremely valuable service to the Christians. In 1174, the king assessed the payment to the Tortosan *moreria* (the city’s

labor service required could be either military service or work on municipal walls. The latter helped finance the Christian military infrastructure.⁸ Increasingly during the thirteenth century, the kings of Aragon also levied extraordinary taxes on Jewish communities in the Crown to finance expeditions against other Christian kings in Iberia.⁹ Thus, a large role of non-Christian groups was to support financially the Christian military culture that had conquered them.

Not only did Christian and non-Christian realms make military alliances and fight together, even against rival groups of coreligionists, but non-Christians were also expected to do so when living in Christian territory. The participation of subject non-Christians in the military culture of the Crown was not limited to financing it with their labor. Indeed, the nature of the Muslims' obligations differed somewhat from those of the Jews. Muslims were a regular part of the king's army, even in wars against other Christians, by the fourteenth century. They served as footsoldiers (usually archers) but also as cavalry. The kings of Aragon had claimed all non-Christians as their personal serfs since at least the late eleventh century, so it was easier to draft Muslims for war than Christians. Some Jews served as well, but not as frequently, and there is not much evidence to extrapolate Jewish military service back before the fourteenth century, except in municipal defense.¹⁰

By the end of the thirteenth century, with the Crown cut off from any direct Muslim invasion, it was also relatively safe to arm non-Christians in the service of a Christian kingdom. This was not a new thing for either side. Muslims and Christians had fought with each other against rival coreligionists almost as much as they had against each other during the entire period of the *Reconquista*.

Despite this ongoing cultural understanding, it is still surprising to see Muslims drafted as early as the mid-thirteenth century into Christian armies on the frontier when the possibility of Muslim revolt

Muslim quarter) for its members' work in the city and on the area's castles at 1600 masmudinas in gold; Cartulario de Tortosa, *Archivo del Gran Priorado de Cataluña*, 115, *Archivo de la Corona de Aragon*, Barcelona, Spain, doc. 265, fol. 80.

⁸ Boswell, *The Royal Treasure*, 167–71.

⁹ Yom Tov Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry: Community and Society in the Crown of Aragon, 1213–1327* (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1997), 181.

¹⁰ Boswell, *The Royal Treasure*, 171–86.

or outside invasion was still high.¹¹ Nor was the king the only lord in the Crown of Aragon who used the Muslims in his army. In the *carta de població* (settlement charter) that the Templars made with thirty Muslim families for resettling the village of Villastar (*Bellestar*) in northern Valencia in July 1267, for example, the *zofra* (*azofra*) service tax included one footsoldier from every Muslim household. However, the Templars retained control of the village's fortifications, specifically excluding the Muslim settlers from this obligation.¹² Though Christian lords did not yet trust Muslims with manning municipal fortifications as much as they did a century later, their treatment of Jews was different from early on. In December 1149, Ramon Berenguer IV gave the Jewish community in Tortosa the charge of repopulating "*Daracinam*" (the *drassanes*, or old Muslim shipyards on the north-eastern bank of the river) with permission to build sixty houses (*mansiones*) on the land. The gift came with the responsibility for maintaining and defending seventeen towers (*turribus*) there.¹³

As the above examples show, a major aspect of non-Christians' military roles in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries entailed involvement in the defense of one's own city or town. This responsibility frequently appeared in surrender treaties. The 1149 surrender treaty of Tortosa required that all inhabitants swear to defend the city if it ever came under attack—regardless of who the attacker was.¹⁴ This responsibility was reiterated to the Jews, specifically, in Ramon Berenguer IV's charter to them the following year where he gave them the shipyards.¹⁵ The count/king's reassertion was not due to a distrust of the Jews of Tortosa, but rather due to quite the opposite. Since the Jews seem to have welcomed the Christian conquest in Tortosa, Ramon Berenguer was reconfirming their stronger, more reliable, loyalty.¹⁶ Perhaps he was also hoping to show the Muslims,

¹¹ Boswell, *The Royal Treasure*, 171–4.

¹² María Luisa Ledesma Rubio, *Cartas de población del reino de Aragón en los siglos medievales*, Vol. 18, *Fuentes Históricas Aragonesas* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1991), 260–1, doc. 210; AHN, cód. 466, pp. 40–1, doc. 42.

¹³ *Les Cartes de Població Cristiana i de Seguretat de Jueus i Sarraïns de Tortosa (1148/1149): Actes de les Jornades d'Estudi Commemoratives del 850è Aniversari de la Seua Concessió, Tortosa, 14, 15 i 16 de Maig de 1999*, ed. Josep Serrano Daura, (Barcelona: Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, 2000), 348–50, doc. 3; Cartulario de Tortosa, doc. 269, fol. 83.

¹⁴ *Les Cartes de Població Cristiana i de Seguretat de Jueus*, 343–5, doc. 1.

¹⁵ *Les Cartes de Població Cristiana i de Seguretat de Jueus*, 348–50, doc. 3.

¹⁶ Ramon Miravall, *El call jueu de Tortosa, l'any 1149, Episodis de la Història* (Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 1973), 33–7.

by his treatment of the Jews, that cooperation would get them better treatment than discontent and revolt.¹⁷

Another surrender treaty, this time of Chivert in northern Valencia, also stressed an agreement that all parties would defend the town if it came under attack.¹⁸ Surrender treaties in Valencia, however, did not always stipulate military obligations but instead military exemptions. The surrender treaty between James I and the inhabitants of Xativa in Valencia in 1244–5 exempted non-Christian inhabitants from military duties, especially against other Muslims, if only in theory. Naturally, the capitulating inhabitants were surrendering under duress rather than out of goodwill toward their conquerors. The Arabic version of the treaty indicates that when the inhabitants of Xativa signed it they saw it as a temporary settlement. James, on the other hand, appears from the Latin version of the same document to have seen it as a permanent treaty of capitulation. He therefore responded harshly when the political situation changed and Xativa revolted against him in 1248.¹⁹ Valencia, where the Muslims may have remained in the majority until well into the fourteenth century, was a classic case of both the risks and necessity of keeping conquered minorities in place rather than expelling them.

Nor were those minorities always willing to remain. Members of religious minorities who disliked the majority Christian rule most often voted with their feet and went south to territory where they would be in the majority again.²⁰ In the twelfth century they were usually allowed to leave, if they chose, especially in the immediate aftermath of a conquest. As the thirteenth century progressed, however, the Crown passed more and more laws and made more and more decrees that prevented these populations from leaving their own areas, let alone fleeing to Muslim territory.²¹ Jews and the wealthier city Muslims seem to have had more freedom than Muslim

¹⁷ Cynthia Maya, "Conquest and Pragmatism: Jew and Muslim in Post-Conquest Tortosa," *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 11 (1999): 15–25.

¹⁸ Robert I. Burns, *Islam under the Crusaders: Colonial Survival in the Thirteenth-Century Kingdom of Valencia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 234–8.

¹⁹ Robert I. Burns and Paul E. Chevedden, *Negotiating Cultures: Bilingual Surrender Treaties in Muslim-Crusader Spain under James the Conqueror* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 1999), 106–11.

²⁰ Commonly seen in early Tortosan and Lleidan documents; For example: *Diplomatari de la catedral de Tortosa (1062–1193)*, ed. Antoni Virgili (Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 1997), 62, doc. 17.

²¹ Maya, "Conquest and Pragmatism," 15–25; Harvey, *Islamic Spain*, 106.

groups in rural areas, but in general non-Christian groups found any permanent mobility greatly restricted by the fourteenth century.

This option was also limited by the physical problem of being able to reach such an area. In the initial Muslim conquest, many Christian populations were isolated within Muslim territory. Most of Spain below the ruling level remained Christian at first and only gradually converted to Islam, leaving the Mozarabs in the minority.²² During the Aragonese push south, especially following the conquest of the Ebro Valley, Muslim communities as far north as the Pyrenees in Aragon were isolated and could not flee south.²³ Many of them remained Muslim until they were forcibly converted in the early sixteenth century to nominally Christian Moriscos, while the Jews were expelled in 1492. When the Morisco communities still did not assimilate into the overall community, they were subsequently expelled between 1609 and 1611 on the charges that they remained crypto-Muslims.²⁴

The option of flight therefore most often appeared in southern Catalonia and Aragon during the most dynamic periods of the *Reconquista* from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries. Even then, only Muslims who had the resources to flee did so, leaving the poorer, less educated farmers, the exarics, as the majority of those who remained. The Muslims who could not migrate (later called "Mudejares") stayed and made the best of the situation through surrender treaties, charters of settlement and other community agreements with the new majority. Most of the Jews, in contrast, appear to have remained out of choice, enjoying the king's preferential treatment.²⁵

But why was it so important to the Christians that these groups remain behind? And why was this a viable option in the Crown of Aragon during this period? The *Reconquista* in Aragon and Catalonia began later than the rest of Spain. This was partly due to geography. The main target for both the Aragonese kings and the Catalanian counts was the Ebro River valley, which stretched northwest to southeast from the Aragonese border with Navarre to the coast of Catalonia

²² Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd., 1996), 67–8.

²³ Christopher Gerrard, "Opposing Identity: Muslims, Christians and the Military Orders in Rural Aragon," *Medieval Archaeology: Journal of the Society for Medieval Archaeology* 43 (1999): 143–160.

²⁴ Harvey, *Islamic Spain*, 5.

²⁵ Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, 1–30.

on the Mediterranean. Important cities like Tortosa in southern Catalonia were blocked on both sides of the river valley by steep mountain ranges. This accident of geography made the Ebro valley difficult to conquer but easy to defend once conquered. Valencia, similarly, was situated on a coastal plain ringed by mountains to the north, west and south. Once the Christians took it, they were able to keep it more easily than other parts of Spain. They were therefore more willing, and more able, to encourage non-Christians to remain.²⁶ Even after the conquest of the Ebro valley was completed in the 1150s, however, the kings of Aragon faced problems with a hostile border to the south. The surrender terms of the three major cities on this southern frontier—Zaragoza (1118), Tortosa (1148) and Lleida (1149)—reflected this unease and the variety of methods that the kings had to use to keep them.²⁷ The kings chose, for the most part, to encourage the non-Christian population to stay, with many concessions, for two main reasons.

First, agriculture in the Ebro valley, notably viticulture, olive culture, fruit orchards and mills, required intensive cultivation, but Christians were a minority in the newly conquered territories. Old Catalonia and Aragon did not have a large enough population to exploit these areas well. Immigrants came from southern France, but the Christians would not achieve sufficient numbers to make the kings begin to consider the non-Christians in the area expendable until the fourteenth century.

Second, the kings of the Crown of Aragon had no wish to expel non-Christians anyway, because they were such lucrative and productive groups. Both the Muslims and the Jews knew the land and how to maintain its worth. The kings wanted to keep as many of these specialized agricultural workers in place as possible. Non-Christians made a lucrative tax base, were more easily controlled than Christian vassals, and their remaining behind would reduce the disruption that war had made to the fragile system of agriculture. Jews, in particular, a productive minority group everywhere with no empires of coreligionists to relieve them militarily, were encouraged to stay. The kings singled out individuals from their communities

²⁶ Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, 1–7.

²⁷ Xavier Eritja Ciuró, “Reflexions sobre la comunitat andalusina de Lleida després de la conquesta (2^a meitat s. XII),” in *Les Cartes de Població Cristiana i de Seguretat de Jueus i Sarrains*, 299–307.

and made them court officials, *baillis* and physicians who facilitated royal rule in the Christian lands.²⁸

The kings so prized non-Christians as vassals that they reserved them as their own. The actual status of non-Christians in the Crown of Aragon, whether free or servile, is unclear, but the kings took their own roles as their non-Christian subjects' protectors seriously. Thus, non-Christians were both obligated to the king directly and enjoyed his direct protection. To attack non-Christians in his lands was to attack him.²⁹

Due to the organization of the *taifa* city-states in the southern Ebro Valley, the people there had a more centralized view of administration than in Old Aragon and Catalonia (except in Barcelona). The inhabitants of Zaragoza, Tortosa, Lleida and Barcelona understood that they had certain rights and obligations as urban dwellers. This was not just due to Muslim rule, however. All of the above cities had been founded during the Roman period, when northeastern Spain was administered from one main city, Tarragona. The inhabitants of these cities therefore had long-standing traditions of urban identity.³⁰ They also understood that while some of their rights and obligations might change due to their religion, they all—Christian, Muslim and Jew—had such rights and obligations in the cities that they inhabited. In military terms, these rights and obligations came in two basic forms—military service or taxation and responsibility for maintaining and defending parts of the city walls (including fortresses inside or on them).

Muslims could be required to serve in the armies of their local lords and the king, depending on the agreement between lord and king. Though the early kings and counts of Aragon and Catalonia had given out numerous non-Christian groups to various lords in the twelfth century, they began to reclaim them in the late thirteenth century. The kings needed the taxes that these lucrative groups brought in, and the Muslims made for a ready group to be used as footsoldiers in the king's army, though they usually paid taxes in lieu of service and not hand in hand with it. In times of war, however,

²⁸ Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, 15–18.

²⁹ Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, 9–12.

³⁰ Simon Keay, "Urban Transformation and Cultural Change," in *The Archaeology of Iberia: The Dynamics of Change*, ed. Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Simon Keay (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 192–210.

particularly toward the end of the thirteenth century, Muslims and Jews might find themselves paying extraordinary taxes in addition to the military service owed by the Muslims. These extraordinary taxes covered not only the maintenance of fortresses but also the financing of the king's military expeditions outside Aragon. Sometimes non-Christians were even required to man and maintain small fortresses for their lords in rural areas themselves.³¹

However, drafts for foreign wars and taxes were an obligation to a lord rather than to a town or city. Where we tend to see municipal military obligations are in the defense of cities against attack. These show up in surrender treaties and charters of settlement. It appears to have been a common understanding among all three religions in the Iberian peninsula at this time that defense of one's city superseded more regional or international religious obligations. While some non-Christians in Christian lands (and Christians in Muslim lands) betrayed their cities to outside coreligionists, most tended to put their cities first. This was true despite the understanding that religious minorities could never hope to achieve complete citizenship.³² In Muslim cities they would always be *dhimmis*, and in Christian cities, they would always be *habitantes* rather than *cives*. The main difference between *habitantes* and *cives* was that *habitantes* had no say in the running of the city. They could not serve on any ruling council, though they might serve as officials in their own communities, or as scribes.³³ Jews could also acquire power as representatives of the king in a certain area. In this way, a Jewish royal *bailli* named Jafia reorganized the district of Lleida for the king in the 1160s and 1170s, a job that put him in authority over many Christians.³⁴ However, non-Christians still often identified themselves as citizens of some sort and identified with the city they inhabited. Therefore, they tended to put the needs and defense of their city over the needs and military ambitions of foreign coreligionists.³⁵

The reason probably stemmed from completely practical consid-

³¹ Boswell, *The Royal Treasure*, 166–71.

³² Philip Daileader, *True Citizens: Violence, Memory and Identity in Medieval Perpignan, The Medieval Mediterranean: Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400–1453*, vol. 25 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 115.

³³ Boswell, *The Royal Treasure*, 325–30.

³⁴ Sans i Travé, *Col·lecció Diplomàtica de la Casa del Temple de Barberà*, doc. 78.

³⁵ Cartulario de Tortosa, Fol. 80 No. 265 (July 14, 1174); Daileader, *True Citizens*, 2–3.

erations—allowing one's coreligionists into a besieged city did not necessarily win one full citizenship, as the invaders tended to parcel out power among themselves. The Mozarabs, arabized Christians who had lived for centuries under Muslim rule in the now reconquered territories, discovered this to their cost. However, suspicion and persecution of them by the Latin Church as heretics does not seem to have made them long for any return of Muslim rule. They were absorbed fairly quietly into the new administration, but in the process they lost all of their cultural identity, including their own language and liturgy.³⁶

Another reason for inhabitants of a city to band together against an outside attack, regardless of religion, was because a hostile takeover of a city, even by surrender treaty, always involved some destruction. Invading armies, however theoretically sympathetic to their coreligionists within a city's walls, were not adept at distinguishing between allies and enemies when it came to sacking a city. For example, Ramon Berenguer, when he took Tortosa, negotiated not with the city itself but with the remaining defenders who had locked themselves in the city's fortress, *La Suda*. As it was, the city appears to have been relatively undamaged due to the negotiated surrender. However, contemporary documents of Lleida, which fell to assault the following year, discuss the necessity of rebuilding much of that city afterward.³⁷

There was also a difference in the way Iberian Christians and Muslims pursued conquest during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that would discourage non-Christians from supporting Muslim attacks on Christian cities. This lay in the demographic and political reality that until relatively late in this period, al-Andalus was still larger, more populous, and militarily stronger than any one Iberian Christian kingdom—and often more so than all of them. Thus the Muslims waged rapid, destructive raids meant to frighten the Christians into submission as much as to reconquer territory.³⁸ Furthermore, these raids were spearheaded, from the eleventh to early thirteenth centuries, by the Almoravids and Almohads, Islamic reform move-

³⁶ Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain*, 17–21, 68–9.

³⁷ Joan Busqueta i Riu, "Sobre la carta de poblament de Lleida (1150): l'herència de Tortosa," in *Les Cartes de Població Cristiana i de Seguretat de Jueus i Sarraïns*, 199–212.

³⁸ Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, 119–121, 165–6.

ments from North Africa. These military dynasties fought their native coreligionists for control of al-Andalus as much as they fought the Christians.³⁹ The Christians in Aragon, on the other hand, were motivated by more practical considerations than holy war. Relatively weak and still small in population, they were willing to make concessions to besieged cities. Thus, though the negotiated fall of Zaragoza in 1118 fatally weakened Lleida and Tortosa, neither of those cities fell for another three decades.⁴⁰ Defending one's own city (even when it was ruled by Christians) over helping one's coreligionists during a siege seems therefore to have been the better option for many subject Muslims in the Crown of Aragon during this period.

That both Muslims and Jews were allowed to continue worshipping in their own religion helped reconcile them to staying and even taking on military obligations for Christians. In the surrender treaty for Tortosa made up at the end of 1148, for example, Ramon Berenguer IV allowed the Muslims of the city to retain their central mosque.⁴¹ In a 1228 document from the same area, Jews were allowed by the Templars to build a synagogue when they resettled an abandoned village. In addition, they took on the obligation of maintaining the village fortifications around the Templar fortress there, just as they had agreed to do for the count/king in the gift of the *drassanes* in 1150.⁴² A document from around 1200 shows the Bishop of Tortosa listing revenues from olive groves and vineyards that supported a mosque in the village of Xerta.⁴³ By giving non-Christians freedom to worship and allowing them to continue owning and profiting from the land, the kings and lords of the Crown of Aragon were able to secure the willingness of non-Christians to defend that land from Muslims in times of invasion. These invasions continued until the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1213. Loyalty in revolts, such as those in Valencia, remained a problem for the rest of the century.

³⁹ David Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002–1086* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 285–91.

⁴⁰ Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain*, 179.

⁴¹ Daura, *Les Cartes de Població Cristiana i de Seguretat de Jueus i Sarraïns*, 343–4.

⁴² Laureà Pagarolas i Sabaté, *Els Templers de les Terres de L'Ebre (Tortosa): De Jaume I fins a l'abolició de l'Ordre (1213–1312), Volume II* (Tarragona: Diputació de Tarragona, 1999), 41–2, doc. 33; *Cartulario de Tortosa*, doc. 181, fol. 59r; Daura, *Les Cartes de Població Cristiana i de Seguretat de Jueus i Sarraïns*, 348–50, doc. 3; *Cartulario de Tortosa*, doc. 269, fol. 83.

⁴³ Virgili, *Diplomatari de la catedral de Tortosa*, 612–15, doc. 495.

It should be no surprise, then, that we do see instances of non-Christians paying military taxes and being drafted into and fighting in Christian armies. Most commonly, they had specific obligations regarding civic defense in a way that was not common, for example, for Muslims under Latin rule in Palestine, though even in Palestine Christians used Muslims in their armies. It is possible that at least some of the native-born mercenaries in Palestine—the Turcoples, for example—were Muslims.⁴⁴ A few Turcoples appear in Spanish documents from early thirteenth century Tortosa, but they may have been Templar officers from Palestine.⁴⁵ They do not appear to have been a common military group in Spain.

However, despite a more secure military situation in northeastern Spain from the late twelfth century onward and a willingness to use non-Christians in civil defense, a residual unease with giving over direct guardianship of military fortifications (aside from city walls) to Muslims remained at this time, as in the case of the Muslim settlers at Villastar. The documents (and archeology) of southern Catalonia and Aragon indicate that this area had become militarized into a heavily fortified society during the *taifa* period in the eleventh century.⁴⁶ Some of the properties that were distributed in the area around Lleida during the 1150s and 1160s, after their Muslim owners had fled, were *turres*, probably simple stone, brick or wooden fortifications that consisted of a single tower in which defenders could barricade themselves when a village was overrun.⁴⁷ The city fortresses in both Tortosa and Lleida in Catalonia, each called *La Suda*, were expansions of the original Muslim fortifications. The Templar castles at Miravet, upriver and north of Tortosa, and at Monzón, on the border

⁴⁴ David Nicolle, *Medieval Warfare Source Book: Christian Europe and its Neighbours* (London: Brockhampton Press, 1996), 130–1; R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097–1193*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 111–2.

⁴⁵ Laureà Pagarolas i Sabaté, *La Comanda del Temple de Tortosa: primer període (1148–1213)* (Tortosa: Institut d'Estudis Dertosenses, 1984), 311–13, doc. 122, 325–6, doc. 130; Pagarolas, *Els Templers de les Terres de L'Ebre*, 270–1, doc. 216; Cartulario de Tortosa, doc. 68, fol. 23 r–v; Pagarolas, *Els Templers*, 44–6, doc. 35, 53–4, doc. 43; Cartulario de Tortosa, doc. 74, fol. 25r.

⁴⁶ Jordi Bolòs, “Changes and Survival: the Territory of Lleida (Catalonia) after the Twelfth-century Conquest,” trans. Paul Freedman, *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001): 313–329.

⁴⁷ *Col·lecció diplomàtica de la Casa del Temple de Gardeny: 1070–1200*, ed. Ramon Sarobe i Huesca (Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 1998), 1: 373–4, doc. 237; Joaquim Miret y Sans, *Cartorial dels Templers de les Comandes de Gardeny y Barbens* (Barcelona: L'Avenç, 1899), 25.

between Catalonia and Aragon, were both built around Muslim fortresses. A tenth century Muslim donjon still survives at Monzón. Muslim workmen were also used in building some of these fortifications. The “fortified palace” of the Templar and Hospitaller convent at Novillas on the Aragonese-Navarrese border shares some characteristics of brickwork with fifteenth century Mudejar towers in nearby Zaragoza. In that city, the Muslims were also responsible for maintaining the king’s palace, the *Aljafería*, once a Muslim fortress. Regardless of whether they were trusted with defending them, Muslim workers with their particular skills were expected to maintain city walls, in addition to those of the *moreía* (the Muslim quarter), as part of their feudal obligations to the king.⁴⁸

Jews escaped many of the more onerous military obligations that the Muslims suffered and were not drafted as often into the king’s armies. This had more to do with the fact that the king had other ways of exploiting them for his military efforts (such as his extraordinary taxes) than any suspicion of disloyalty or apparent disrespect for the Jews’ ability to fight. Thus, while the Jews did not generally have to fight for the Crown, except in defense of a city under siege, and they often escaped the military tax, they did incur obligations to maintain and defend fortifications in villages that they resettled, as they did in the Tortosa region. They were better able to negotiate their tax obligations than the Muslims, and due to the number of Jews in the royal administration they more frequently had the ear of the king than did Muslims. Since the Jews appear to have welcomed the Christians overall in the Crown of Aragon, the Christians in northeastern Spain trusted them regarding military issues much more than they trusted the Muslims, at least until the Dominicans recast all non-Christians as heretics following the Fourth Lateran Council and the end of the Albigensian Crusade in the mid-thirteenth century.⁴⁹ This does not mean that ordinary Christians in the Crown of Aragon liked the Jews better, though. The king’s preferential treatment of the Jews did not go unnoticed, and the fact that he singled out some Jews for special treatment angered both Christians and other Jews. Being a border society, the Crown of Aragon had a culture of violence in the late thirteenth century, and of violence

⁴⁸ Boswell, *The Royal Treasure*, 167–8.

⁴⁹ Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, 50–3.

toward Jews in particular. Because of this, and despite their relatively non-military status, Jews certainly did not go unarmed. They carried swords, knives and clubs, with few if any restrictions on these before the fourteenth century.

Non-Christians in Spain were also allowed to arm and protect themselves, to a certain extent, from their Christian neighbors' jealousy and hostility in other ways. In cities and large towns, non-Christians lived in quarters walled off from the rest of the city, although in some areas the Muslims lived *extra muralles*—outside the city walls. Non-Christians were not confined to the city quarters where they lived as many owned and worked agricultural property outside the city, but their quarters did provide them with areas in which they could live according to their own religion, culture, customs and laws.

Jews lived separately from Muslims, and there is some evidence that these two groups did not get along in the Crown of Aragon. In the surrender treaty of Tortosa, the Muslims exacted a promise from Ramon Berenguer that he would not allow the Jews to own Muslim slaves.⁵⁰ Furthermore, when the count/king made city charters with the inhabitants the following year, he made two—a general one and one with the Jews—allowing the surrender treaty to stand as the Muslims' charter. Some Jews were also involved in the slave trade in Catalonia, which increased the hostility between the two minority groups.⁵¹ Although Jewish and Muslim quarters were separate from each other, this separation did not always reduce tensions, since they often shared the same gate. In Tortosa, this was called the *Assoc* (*sug*), a Arabic word for "market."⁵²

Although the inhabitants frequently had the right to close their gates to Christians at night or during Easter Week, Christians did enter non-Christian quarters, both for purposes of harassment and on legitimate (or illegitimate) business. Jewish artisans were patronized by Christians, as occurred in Monzón.⁵³ Muslim quarters were

⁵⁰ "Nullo judeo comparit mora nec moro qui fuerit captivo et nullo judeo non denocet ad mauro, et si fecerit quod faciat inde directum," Daura, *Les Cartes de Població Cristiana i de Seguretat de Jueus i Sarraïns*, 345, doc. 1.

⁵¹ Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, 34.

⁵² Pagarolas, *Els Templers de les Terres de L'Ebre*, 263–4, doc. 206.

⁵³ Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain, Vol. I: From the Age of Reconquest to the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Louis Schoffman (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971), 150.

popular with Christians as centers of gaming, prostitution and other questionable pursuits.⁵⁴ Non-Christians usually encouraged Christian business, but the Dominican preachers of the Inquisition who descended upon the Jewish quarters in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were less welcome. The fact that they deliberately entered these quarters to preach, especially during Holy Week, while annoying to the inhabitants, was not the main problem. It was that they brought Christian mobs in their wake, whom they whipped up into frenzies of rage in which they attacked the quarter and its inhabitants. While the kings of Aragon frowned upon this practice, and even defended non-Christians against mobs, fining Christian offenders or canceling fines and condemnations made by the Inquisition against non-Christians, they could only do so much without risking their roles as defenders of the Christian faith and crusaders against Islam.⁵⁵

However, chronic suspicion and hostility did not stop non-Christians from being accepted as allies in areas where Christians, Muslims and Jews all had a common cause and the defense of homes and cities was considered by all three religions to be a common cause. The Roman city-state form of infrastructure still survived, with all of its attendant obligations and expectations, and this, in the end, overrode some of the divisions that split the three religions in the Iberian peninsula.

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⁵⁴ Boswell, *The Royal Treasure*, 70–2.

⁵⁵ Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry*, 50–3, 58–60, 211–2.

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COMMUNAL PIRACY IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND'S CINQUE PORTS

David G. Sylvester

The confederacy of medieval English port towns known as the Cinque Ports played a crucial role in the domestic and international affairs of the realm in the two centuries leading up to the Black Death. Britain's fortunes have always depended upon an ability to negotiate and control the waters that define its frontiers and opportunities; in the Middle Ages the Sussex and Kent communities bordering the narrowest stretch of water linking England to its continental allies and enemies (what contemporaries called the "Narrowe Seas") functioned as stepping-stones to the strategic port of Calais, the Low Countries, and the crown's possessions in Normandy. At a time when English monarchs lacked the resources to maintain a permanent standing navy, the leading residents of these port towns (known as the Barons) succeeded in obtaining charters achieving broad economic, judicial, and political liberties in exchange for their naval expertise.¹ Royal endorsement brought prestige and legitimate opportunity to the Barons, but it also enabled them to capitalize in less than ideal ways on their political and geographic position. Arguably, the Cinque Ports constitute one of the better examples of a medieval community able to balance a legal commitment to royal authority with a penchant for piracy.

Described by contemporaries as the "backbone" of the medieval English navy and eventually as the "parent and exemplar of the Royal Navy," the Cinque Ports has long enjoyed near celebrity status among historians with patriotic leanings.² While naval necessity prompted the development of Britain's only pre-industrial urban confederacy, it is clear that the arrangement with the crown nurtured ambivalence among these port town elites that manifested itself in

¹ The origins of these liberties are discussed in K. M. E. Murray, *The Constitutional History of the Cinque Ports* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1935), 16–20.

² Montagu Burrows, *The Cinque Ports* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1888; reprinted 1903), 3.

a rather dark way. Long before the word evoked images of skull and crossbones, the thirteenth-century chronicler, Matthew Paris, described the Barons of the Cinque Ports as England's *piratici*, and few contemporary writers did more to promote the impression of these port town residents as a maritime wrecking crew.³ Later writers echoed Paris' view of the Barons. William Laird Clowes characterized them as "the most formidable of [all] the English sea robbers."⁴ This sentimental assessment, along with the inflated estimation of the confederacy's naval role, sought to cast the Barons as the precursors of the Elizabethan swashbucklers. In the words of Nicholas Harris Nicolas, the distinguished nineteenth-century British naval historian:

While these hordes of daring robbers are justly execrated for their deeds of cruelty and violence, it should not be forgotten that their skill, hardihood, and adventurous spirit have descended to the British seamen of modern times; and much of the heroism and contempt of danger for which our navy has been so long distinguished may have been derived from the piratical and buccaneering proceedings of former ages.⁵

Both views of the confederacy are romanticized, and in reality the Barons were in many respects much like the entrepreneurial elites of other English port towns who, as a matter of course, profited from the business of warfare and communal violence. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the line between so-called normal and illegal activity was more than fluid. Notwithstanding the existence of maritime laws, the sea was effectively outside the jurisdiction of medieval monarchs and their representatives and thus open to less than scrupulous behavior by commercial shippers.⁶ Sanctioned

³ For a discussion of the evolution of the meaning of the word, see *Documents Relating to the Law and Customs of the Sea*, Vol. 1: 1205–1648, ed. R. G. Marsden (London: Navy Record Society, 1915), 99, n. 1. For a contemporary legal definition of the status of European pirates and the legal mechanisms to control their actions, see Frederic L. Cheyette, "The Sovereign and the Pirates, 1332," *Speculum* 45 (1970): 40–68.

⁴ William Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present* (London: S. Low, Marston & Co., 1897), 136.

⁵ Nicholas Harris Nicolas, *A History of the Royal Navy from the Earliest Times to the Wars of the French Revolution* (London: R. Bentley, 1847), 1: 239.

⁶ Nick Rodger described the maritime realm as that "debatable land beyond the frontiers of settled society"; N. A. M. Rodger, "The New Atlantic: Naval Warfare in Sixteenth the Century," in *War at Sea in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. John B. Hattendorf and Richard W. Unger (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003): 238.

trading ventures could incorporate smuggling on the side, and even royally-commissioned fleets sometimes turned their efforts to piracy. Because they practiced their trades at sea, medieval mariners shared an exposure to heightened dangers regardless of their social or economic status. The ever-present hazards associated with severe climate, complicated by the limited navigational and sailing technologies available during the period, put these maritime workers at risk. Competition among shipping interests was almost always fierce and largely unregulated despite the existence of international maritime law. Medieval shipping was made more dangerous by the ongoing political disruptions of the day. Since England's peacetime mercantile shippers were its wartime naval force, mariners and the ships they sailed were fair game and open to attack or seizure when international tensions boiled over. The hazards of shipping during the later Middle Ages and the independent-minded camaraderie they fostered may have been the very stimuli that led medieval mariners to cross the thin blue line that separated licit maritime activity from outright piracy.

How then did the Barons of the Cinque Ports differ, if at all, from shippers and mariners in other medieval English port towns when it came to piracy and general misbehavior at sea?⁷ With regard to their contemporary and ongoing reputation as pirates, the distinction is largely historiographical rather than historical. In spite of Mathew Paris' assessment and the older literature on the Barons, illegal trading and raiding were not the sole purview of the Barons. Newcastle merchants certainly smuggled their share of wool out of the realm, and the west Channel ports boasted some of the most high-profile raiders of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁸

The most significant of medieval maritime laws are those contained in the Roll of Oléron, printed in *The Black Book of the Admiralty*, Vol. 1, ed. Travers Twiss (London: Longman, 1871; reprinted Abingdon, Oxon.: Professional Books Limited, 1985); See also D. A. Gardiner, "Belligerent Rights on the High Seas in the Fourteenth Century," *Law Quarterly Review* 48 (1932): 523–30; and Timothy J. Runyan, "The Rolls of Oléron in Fourteenth Century England," *American Journal of Legal History* 19 (1975): 95–111.

⁷ Rodger has effectively argued that medieval naval warfare was often an entirely private and commercial endeavor. Rodger, "The New Atlantic," 237–8.

⁸ J. B. Blake, "Medieval Smuggling in the North-East: Some Fourteenth-Century Evidence," *Archaeologia Aeliana* 43 (1969): 243–60. The notables from Devon and Cornwall included John Hawley of Dartmouth and Henry Paye of Poole; See also Philip Gosse, "Piracy," *Mariner's Mirror* 36 (1950): 340 and Stephen P. Pistono, "Henry IV and the English Privateers," *English Historical Review* 90 (1975): 322–30.

Why did the Barons come to exemplify, at least in many writers' minds, the consummate medieval pirates? Since—as Rodger has pointed out—the routine activities of medieval shippers were difficult to distinguish from what came to be viewed as piracy, it may have had to do with the high visibility of the mariners of the Cinque Ports during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁹ The Barons were active shippers in the busiest shipping channel of the realm; certainly no other group of English port towns was as identifiable as a maritime force during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Perhaps their maritime presence was enough to stir up the wrath of competitors and the imagination of chroniclers. At least in part, the Barons' reputation was a product of record bias. As C. J. Ford pointed out in his study of lawlessness in the Channel at the outset of the fifteenth century, the medieval record of piracy is by no means comprehensive and includes only those cases in which the crown chose to intervene.¹⁰ As Mollat observed, the problem with the history of medieval piracy centers on the fact that, “mal factors don't leave a record of their actions voluntarily.” Consequently historians are left with those exceptional cases of interest to the king (for whatever reason) and the unanswered question as to just how much value the record holds.¹¹

One likely reason that the Cinque Ports dominate the medieval English evidence of piracy in the period before the Black Death is their confederate status. Victims of maritime assault often resorted to the sanctioned reprisal or distraint to recover their losses.¹² Shippers who had suffered losses undoubtedly had better odds if they laid claim against the entire confederacy rather than a single port town.

⁹ N. A. M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of Britain* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), 1: 115–16.

¹⁰ C. J. Ford, “Piracy or Policy: the Crisis in the Channel, 1400–1403,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 29 (1979): 63.

¹¹ There remain additional complications presented by the medieval record of piracy. In spite of the legal mechanisms such as the letter of marque, and general directives to raid contained in the Patent Rolls, no clear distinction between sanctioned raiding and piracy is apparent. Mollat claims that in northern waters a “relation synonymie” existed between medieval piracy and authorized raiding; Michel Mollat, “De la piraterie sauvage à la course réglementée, XIV^e–XV^e siècle,” in *Études d'Histoire Maritime (1938–1975)* (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1977), 7, 9. Ford has demonstrated that even when the crown cried foul and took actions against domestic shippers, its “pirates” may have been carrying out the semi-official policy of the king; Ford, “Piracy or Policy,” 63–78.

¹² Rodger, “The New Atlantic,” 238.

The fact that the Cinque Ports had a common administrator, the Warden, whose job it was to answer such claims and conduct inquiries in the ports, facilitated the issuance of writs against the towns and record keeping.¹³ This administrative unity ensured that the name of the confederacy was raised even when mariners from a particular member port town acted independently. The plethora of complaints against the ports may also reflect the confederacy's elevated role in maritime affairs of the state at the time—their significant naval efforts in Wales, Scotland, and during the Hundred Years War come to mind.

Some of the loudest complaints against the “pirates” of the Cinque Ports, however, coincide precisely with their open opposition to the crown, most notably during the Barons’ War (1262–67) conducted against Henry III. During this civil war, the Cinque Ports sided with the rebel forces of Simon de Montfort and were rewarded with an unlimited license for maritime mayhem. Their enthusiastic exercise of this “liberty” prompted the future King Edward to caution the residents of Winchelsea in 1265 to stop applying themselves “to plundering like pirates.”¹⁴ As the Barons were declared enemies of the crown, this admonition carries deeper meaning than a simple directive against piracy, although there is no evidence to suggest the Barons were targeting only shippers allied to England. If we accept this suggestion that the medieval record reflects the general political and economic profile of port towns (and on certain occasions its political relationship to royal administration), we should not be surprised that the Cinque Ports’ reputation began to lose some of its luster and that Devon and Cornwall mariners emerged as England’s pirates in the decades following the Black Death, a period marked by the confederacy’s decline and the economic “coming out” of the west-Channel ports.¹⁵

The “piracies” of the Cinque Ports, however, were not simply the construct of medieval clerks and naval historians, and like their

¹³ Murray, *Constitutional History*, 121–2.

¹⁴ Oppenheim, “Maritime History of Kent,” in *Victoria County History of Kent*, ed. William Page (London: St. Catherine Press, 1926), 2: 131; William D. Cooper, *History of Winchelsea, One of the Ancient Towns Added to the Cinque Ports* (London: J. R. Smith, 1850), 17–19; and Rodger, *Safeguard*, 59–60.

¹⁵ Ford, “Piracy or Policy,” 64–7; and Pistono, “Henry IV and the English Privateers,” 322–30.

contemporaries in other port towns the Barons did engage in a variety of unsanctioned commercial pursuits, including smuggling, extortion, and raiding. Since the documentary evidence is not reliably representative, and the monetary figures recorded are without a doubt inflated by medieval victims looking to capitalize at the expense of their attackers, a quantitative assessment of the scale of “malfaction” at sea or a comparison to other types of maritime activity is not possible. Did port town residents prosper from maritime raiding? Of course many did; one has only to observe the wealth and power accumulated by the likes of John Hawley of Dartmouth to conclude that sanctioned raiding and piracy could pay and pay well. Many of the Cinque Ports’ wealthier denizens were active in royal service and as pirates. Members of the Alard family of Winchelsea, many of whom served as mayors, bailiffs, royal collectors, and even admirals of the king’s fleets, are recorded as among the most prominent sea raiders.¹⁶ The extent to which their wealth flowed from their illicit dealings is impossible to determine. The record does suggest, however, that felony on land and at sea was an integral part of the culture of many of England’s medieval port towns, the Cinque Ports included, and that few “pirates” suffered for their activities, at least not at the hands of crown officials.

Historiographical caveats aside, addressing the quasi-legal and illegal maritime activity of the Cinque Ports has merit for two major reasons. First, to oppose the king—either through direct opposition or by ignoring crown directives—was a deliberate and conscious act on the part of the Barons and one that had serious implications for the confederacy’s liberties. Such ignoble, self-interested activity demonstrates clearly the economic and political agenda (the *mentalité* if you will) of these port town residents.¹⁷ Second, the “piracies” of the Barons did differ from those of contemporary port town residents insofar as the Barons often acted cooperatively, that is, with the goal of advancing the interests of confederate members and, on occasion, the confederacy as a whole. In many ways, the “community” of the Cinque Ports is most evident in its corporate transgressions, in its outright opposition to the crown, in its attacks on non-confederate

¹⁶ See, for example, *Calendar of Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Records Office (CCR) 1323–7*, 548–9.

¹⁷ Of course, such an analysis would also apply to members of other port towns, as well as any self-conscious community, maritime or otherwise.

shippers, and especially in its open feuds with competitors such as Great Yarmouth. Whatever informal bonds existed between the residents of the southeastern port towns at the time of the imposition of confederate status, or as a result of the granting of royal privileges, it was edified by the desire to protect this corporate status and by a willingness (a commitment even), to do so at the expense of other communities and the crown. The Cinque Ports may have been, as Clowes put it, "strongholds of privilege and disorder," from the perspective of the crown, but in many ways, the Barons' duplicitous behavior was the logical and effective option for port town residents who put self-interest before patriotism and the concerns of their own community ahead of those of the king.¹⁸

The discussion below is not intended to further the Barons' reputation as England's *piratici*. Nor does it provide a catalogue of the Barons' maritime activities characterized as illegal by the medieval crown. Rather, its goal is to demonstrate that the Cinque Ports did prey upon its competitors for economic and political gain and that this type of activity was more the natural consequence of commercial shipping and naval service than a blood sport. That the Barons often collaborated in these activities is of even greater importance, since it demonstrates this medieval maritime community in action.

The Barons' experiences in crown service, where they were often assigned to raid enemy shipping, may have actually contributed to the blurring of lines between naval service and piracy. The relationship between official raiding and piracy may have been part of the problem. The naval historian, Frederick Brooks, has pointed out several instances when the Barons interpreted quite generously their instructions to attack the king's enemies. In 1242 the Barons were ordered by King Henry III to inflict as much damage as possible upon French ships in the Channel. In Brooks' words, the Cinque Ports "indulged in an orgy of piracy, plundering English and foreign vessels indiscriminately."¹⁹ Licensed attacks undoubtedly contributed to these outbreaks of illegal raiding, by imprinting raiding as a job sanctioned by the king. Were the Winchelsea ships that failed to go to Sandwich in 1343 to meet the fleet because they were

¹⁸ Clowes, *Royal Navy*, 136.

¹⁹ Frederick W. Brooks, "The Cinque Ports' Feud with Yarmouth in the Thirteenth Century," *Mariner's Mirror* 19 (1933): 32.

too busy attacking ships in the Channel in fact “patrolling the Channel” as was often their assignment?²⁰ The crown recognized that naval service often provided an excuse for piracy when it directed the Warden of the Cinque Ports in 1282 to send trusted observers aboard the confederacy’s ships. The king’s agents were assigned to ensure that “no evil shall be done by the king’s men under color [or] cloak (*velamini*) of the king’s order.”²¹ This arrangement was rare, however, and in the absence of royal representatives aboard medieval ships, accountability on these converted merchant vessels was all but non-existent. Consequently, commercial shipmasters served as the agents of royal policy, officially or otherwise.

The Barons’ special affiliation with the crown often provided them the opportunity for illicit gain. A Sandwich ship called *Le Snak*, commissioned by the king in 1305 to patrol the Channel “for the security of merchants and others crossing,” took £300 from London merchants aboard the very vessel *Le Snak* was sent to protect.²² Robbery in the king’s name was not limited to the high seas and took place within the port towns themselves. Barons at Sandwich seized the legal profits made by Flemish merchants at London “under color of [royal] commission” in 1337.²³ A favorite racket among the Winchelsea and Rye Barons appointed to represent the crown was to exact money from domestic and foreign traders using the threat of royal retribution for unpaid customs. Redress for the victim was time-consuming, requiring royal inquest and testimony; very often the culprit would have left office before being called to task.²⁴

By no means was the crown exempted from the piratical activities of the Barons. In 1328 mariners from the town of Sandwich hijacked a shipment of wheat *en route* to Berwick for the marriage arranged between young David Bruce and Edward III’s sister, Joan.²⁵

²⁰ CCR 1343–46, 581.

²¹ CCR 1279–88, 158.

²² *Calendar of Patent Rolls Reserved in the Public Record Office (CPR) 1301–07*, 358.

²³ CCR 1337–39, 90, 96.

²⁴ The temptation for such immediate gain was too much for the bailiff of Rye, Richard de Pevensey, who extracted a large ransom from representatives of Christchurch, Canterbury, because he said they had not paid a custom while trading at Winchelsea. Richard was not interested in the claims of the prior’s agents that Christchurch was exempt from the tax; CPR 1272–81, 344.

²⁵ CCR 1327–30, 409; The marriage was a condition of the Treaty of Northampton (1328); W. M. Ormrod, *Edward III: Crown and Political Society in England, 1327–1377* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 5; and May McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959; reprinted 1991), 98–9.

A decade later, unknown townspeople in Winchelsea walked off with the tackle and gear of the king's ship *Nicholas* while it was anchored in the harbor.²⁶ In 1348 Benedict Sely, captain of a ship called the *Laurence*, sailed his vessel into the harbor of his home port of Winchelsea where he sold for profit the flour it was carrying. By December, however, the Chancery had issued an order for the arrest of the *Laurence* and royal officials were ordered to imprison Sely in the Tower at London.²⁷ Sely's problem was two-fold: the flour he unloaded at Winchelsea was supposed to go to the port of Sandwich in Kent and, more importantly, the cargo belonged to the king.

More significant than these examples of individuals acting without regard for the interests of the crown are the occasions of corporate activity on the part of the Barons. Medieval English monarchs were in a constant battle to curb the freebooting tendencies of their subjects when truces were in effect. These disturbances led to many expensive diplomatic entanglements, but they were usually the indirect consequence of English mariners pursuing a self-serving agenda.²⁸ The residents of the Cinque Ports distinguished themselves on several occasions for their outright opposition to the crown, even before the confederacy received royal recognition. In 1052 the mariners of the port towns that eventually came to be known as the Cinque Ports were enticed by Godwin and his father to invade London.²⁹ The Barons again took up arms against the crown during John's civil war. Their allegiance was restored only after the young King Henry III arrived on the throne in 1216, and their renewed loyalty probably had more to do with the French raids in the region than the promise of a new royal administration.³⁰ The Cinque Ports' support of Simon de Montfort has already been discussed, but it is worth pointing out that the Barons maintained their opposition to the crown (and their indiscriminate raiding in the Channel) even after the rebel magnates had been defeated at Evesham. It would seem that two years of unlimited piracy was a plum too valuable to

²⁶ CCR 1333–37, 578.

²⁷ CCR 1346–49, 608.

²⁸ See, for example, Pistono, "Henry IV and the English Privateers," 322–31; See Rodger, *Safeguard*, 116 for the huge compensation payments to Flanders and Genoese interests.

²⁹ F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 566–8.

³⁰ Rodger, *Safeguard*, 54.

surrender. De Montfort's son, appointed keeper of the strategic Dover castle during the war, took refuge at Winchelsea after his father's death at Evesham, and the confederacy surrendered only after Edward I occupied Winchelsea by force in 1267.³¹

Possibly the best (and bloodiest) example of the Barons' cooperation to protect their communal interest is the long-standing feud waged against Great Yarmouth. The herring fair was crucial to the prosperity and identity of the Cinque Ports; the Barons had attended the fair from the eleventh century and may have had a hand in its origin. The rights to reside in the town, land fish, dry nets, maintain the fire beacons, collect tolls and fines, and dispense justice during the fair were arguably the most distinguishing privileges contained in the royal charters granted to the Cinque Ports.³² As Great Yarmouth began to prosper, its townspeople asserted their place at the fair, and resentment towards the privileged outsiders grew. The Barons may have been some of the first players on the scene, but their position at this distant fish fair was far from secure, and the means of protecting their interests were limited. They could, of course, resort to the tried and true method of open violence and regularly did so. The incidents that set off the violence were but the pretext for the deep-seated communal hatred rooted in economic competition.³³ In 1254 Great Yarmouth mariners took exception to the selection of a Winchelsea ship to transport the queen and Prince Edward to Bordeaux; when the Norfolk men appeared with a much larger and impressive ship, the mariners of Winchelsea—with the support of the Barons of other confederate towns—burned it to the waterline. Not surprisingly, the royal party decided to set sail aboard a ship provided by the port town of Southampton.

The most notable incident in this ongoing herring war took place in 1297 as mariners of Yarmouth and the Cinque Ports were transporting Edward I and his army to Flanders. It was preceded by several instances of violence in the months prior to the fleet's departure from Winchelsea: certain ships of Hastings and Winchelsea were destroyed in Yarmouth harbor, a Winchelsea shipmaster and his

³¹ Cooper, *Winchelsea*, 17–19, and Rodger, *Safeguard*, 59–60.

³² *CPR 1272–81*, 203–4.

³³ Described by Oppenheim as “a symptom of a long-standing disease” in “Maritime History,” 132.

crew lying in wait for Calais pirates off Orford were ambushed and murdered by Yarmouth mariners, and as the king's fleet assembled in Winchelsea, Yarmouth men entered the town and killed five of its residents.³⁴ The inevitable blood bath, which erupted at Sluys in Flanders, unfolded almost by design. As soon as the king, his retinues and most of his supplies had been unloaded, the two groups descended upon each other with a vengeance. A royal inquisition into the *melée* estimated that at least 165 men were killed, seventeen ships were burned, and another twelve were looted, while total damages exceeded £5,000. The king's entire military campaign was placed in jeopardy—his Wardrobe ship carrying his treasury was nearly destroyed—and he was only able to restore order by taking hostages from the offending parties. As punishment, the king suspended the rights of both groups.³⁵ The situation was so explosive that Winchelsea ships had to obtain a royal writ of safe-passage—usually granted to alien shippers—in order to attend the herring fair that year.³⁶ Eventually the Barons were ordered to send four representatives from each of the ports to London with full powers. Great Yarmouth sent 24 merchants and fishermen. The eventual “peace settlement” required every shipmaster and two leading mariners to take an oath before leaving port that they would keep the peace and arrest anyone who broke it.³⁷

The crown's dependence upon commercial shippers meant that sanctions against illicit activity were difficult to enforce. Moreover, the crown frequently undermined its own policy against such activity in its drive to meet its naval requirement. Royal pardons to pirates and other outlaws who promised to serve overseas were frequent, even before the Black Death.³⁸ Edward III pardoned over 1,000 men

³⁴ Oppenheim, “Maritime History,” 132–33.

³⁵ Brooks, “Feud,” 44–5; Edward's own account is recorded in his letter to his son, Edward, and his council, which was acting on his behalf back in England; Public Record Office (PRO) *SC1/45/78*, printed in *Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297–8 in England*, Camden Series, 4th series, ed. Michael Prestwich (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980), 24: 144–5; See also Oppenheim, “Maritime History,” 134.

³⁶ W. H. Blaauw, “The Vessels of the Cinque Ports and Their Employment,” *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 4 (1851): 113.

³⁷ Burrows, *Cinque Ports*, 127. Local tradition at Great Yarmouth has it that the town was required to render herrings to Windsor Castle as a result of the Yarmouth bailiff's killing of a bailiff of the Cinque Ports; Robert Furley, “An Outline of the History of Romney Marsh,” *Archaeologiae Cantiana* 10 (1880): 192.

³⁸ See, for example, *CPR* 1258–66, 122, 143; *CCR* 1302–7, 398; *CPR* 1340–43, 119, 477; and *CPR* 1343–45, 448. For similar pardons for the Scottish wars, see *CPR* 1307–13, 98, 144.

convicted of criminal and civil offenses in order to ensure an adequate number of men aboard his enormous invasion fleet to Flanders.³⁹ The liberties of Great Yarmouth and the Cinque Ports were suspended for two years after the feud at Sluys, but this interdict lasted less than a year when the king re-instated the privileges to the offending parties in order to secure their good will and the much-needed use of their ships.⁴⁰ Such political and judicial concessions to port town residents were common simply because the king had nowhere else to turn when in need of ships and men to crew them.

The Barons' public feuds, in open violation of royal directives, clearly demonstrate the cooperative actions taken to protect the shared interests of this maritime community. Sometimes this gang warfare involved individual towns like Great Yarmouth, Falmouth, and Fowey, but it did not preclude open rebellion against the king.⁴¹ The actions of the overtly cooperative Barons demonstrates that the confederacy was not simply a royally-inspired institution designed to meet the needs of the crown, but functioned as a vehicle for the promotion of the economic and political agenda of the southeastern ports. From the Barons' perspective, the alliance was in place to defend their common liberties, maximize their profits, and mete out revenge. It is quite clear that normal economic activity during the middle ages included the raiding of competitors and royal assignments to engage in unsupervised mayhem at sea may have actually encouraged the Barons in their misdeeds. Ultimately, the Barons' utilitarian approach to their naval responsibilities and a willingness to pursue illicit avenues of gain are completely understandable from a confederacy of towns that put the interests of their own community ahead of those of the crown and other English towns.

³⁹ J. S. Kepler, "The Effects of the Battle of Sluys on English Naval Impressment, 1340–1343," *Speculum* 48 (1973): 72; and R. G. Marsden, *Law and Customs of the Sea*, 1: 31–35.

⁴⁰ *CCR 1292–1301*, 62–3; and *CPR 1292–1301*, 348.

⁴¹ Less dramatic outbreaks occurred involving the western English ports and the Norman ports under truce; *CCR 1318–23*, 490; and Brooks, "Feud," 27. This antagonism with the western Channel ports increased during the later Middle Ages as the Cinque Ports had little success insinuating themselves in the expanding southwestern fisheries and were forced to accept the presence of Devon and Cornwall ships off their shores during the fifteenth century; Maryanne Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 310–11.

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WARTIME CORRUPTION AND COMPLAINTS OF THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY

Ilana Krug

The late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries witnessed a great military transformation, one that heavily affected the peasantry in ways it had not before. It was also a period of near-constant warfare, with Edward I's campaigns in France, Wales and Scotland, Edward II's continuous conflicts with Scotland, and the beginning of the Hundred Years' War under Edward III. Peasants were required to participate in nearly every aspect of wartime efforts: as financiers, as victuallers, and as fighters. Yet, as far as the peasantry was concerned, corruption was part and parcel of levies, purveyance and even military service, and it was this added component that often made the already heavy demands unbearable.

Before delving into the abuses of wartime financing, a brief discussion of these demands is appropriate. However, since it is the corruption of such methods rather than the methods themselves that is the topic of this investigation, the following will simply be an overview.

By the time of Edward I, the price of warfare had drastically increased. With the decaying of the feudal military system, kings were forced to pay salaried soldiers rather than being able to rely solely on their feudal host. Fortifications and armor were more expensive, and political and military support had to be bought. J. R. Maddicott estimates that fortification construction in Wales alone reached the unprecedented heights of £78,000, and that Edward's purchase of political and military support from the Low Countries between 1294 and 1298 came to an unbelievable £166,000.¹ In Henry III's time, the English crown did not have the means for financing such military endeavors. Under Edward I, new methods for funding were developed or exploited.

¹ J. R. Maddicott, *The English Peasantry and the Demands of the Crown, 1294-1341* (Oxford: Past and Present Society, 1975), 1-2.

Edward I's constant warring, more than anything, drained the kingdom's coffers and drove him to find new arenas of revenue for the crown. It was under Edward I that taxation was utilized to a greater degree than it had been previously in the Middle Ages. The laity was subjected to heavy levies on movables. Between 1290 and 1307, Edward I was granted eight separate taxes, ranging from a thirtieth of the value of the goods taxed (levied in 1306) to a ninth (levied in 1297).² Despite a consistent relatively high percentage of yield against the total tax assessment, the actual assessment had fallen from the first tax in 1290 of £117,000 to £38,500 in 1296, and the lower figure remained the mean amount up to the Black Death in 1348. W. M. Ormrod, in his endeavor to explain this rapid drop in assessment amounts, posits that "tax payers became more adept in the art of under-valuation as our period progressed, and that lay subsidies therefore became increasingly conservative estimates of the true taxable wealth of England."³ If this is part of, if not the complete explanation, then it is possible to see the tax of 1290 as having been particularly burdensome, enough to make the laity attempt to protect themselves and their economic situations through potentially devious ways that were reflected in later assessments. In truth, J. F. Willard has shown that each man's goods were assessed at well below their market price.⁴ Using this evidence, Maddicott argues that in reality, a tax of a fifteenth might have only recovered a thirtieth of the total value.⁵

Besides the levying of taxes, Edward extended the practice of purveyance—the compulsory sale of victuals to support the royal household—to support the military troops, against which there was bitter complaining. Purveyance was seen as an arbitrary levy and dangerous as the king could levy it without permission from Parliament.⁶ There were legal attempts to curtail the king's prerogative—the *Confirmatio Cartarum* in 1297, the *Articuli super Cartas* in 1300, the Statute of

² For specific information regarding taxation levied between 1290 and 1346, see Table 5.1 in W. M. Ormrod, "The Crown and the English Economy, 1290–1348" in *Before the Black Death*, ed. Bruce M. S. Campbell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 153.

³ J. F. Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes on Personal Property, 1290–1334* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1934), 138–41.

⁴ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 8.

⁵ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 15–7.

⁶ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 23.

Stamford in 1309, the Ordinances in 1311, and other statutes in the 1320s and 1330s—but they were all rather ineffectual. Purveyance typically was a localized phenomenon and frequently revisited the same areas of the English countryside, causing those areas especially to suffer economic strain and possible depression. The counties on the east coast and in the east midlands suffered most; Yorkshire was asked for supplies thirteen times between 1296 and 1307; Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Essex twelve times; and Huntingdonshire eleven times.⁷ This regional inequality of demands continued under Edward II and Edward III. James Masschaele asserts that due to the small percentage of crop yield involved in a purveyance, the imposition was not as heavy as other historians, particularly Maddicott, have maintained. He has calculated that the 1297 purveyance in Kent, involving the produce of about 5000 acres, represented less than one percent of Kent's total acreage. Unfortunately, this deduction does not reflect the percentage of arable land involved or what percentage of an individual's yield might be involved. Masschaele concludes, "in most counties in most purveyances, the demands of the crown could not have involved more than one or two percent of the total pool of arable land."⁸ Again, this assumption does not take into consideration the economic impact purveyance had on the individual, especially since peasant incomes varied widely.

Both Edward II and Edward III continued the systems set into motion by Edward I. Edward II's reign was plagued by military defeat in Scotland and tumultuous politics, as well as by natural disasters. The king levied taxes seven times during his twenty-year reign.⁹ The period of heaviest taxation was in 1315 and 1316 to meet the demands of the Scottish threat after the English defeat at Bannockburn in 1314. Although the levels of taxation failed to match the severity of those under either Edward I or Edward III, "the coincidence of the great famine with these levies made them especially onerous,"¹⁰ and "the most vigorous and widespread local resistance to the levies came [at that time]."¹¹

⁷ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 17.

⁸ James Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants and Markets: Inland Trade in Medieval England, 1150–1350* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 37.

⁹ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 6.

¹⁰ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 7.

¹¹ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 14.

On the other hand, Edward III greatly intensified the existing methods, far surpassing the demands that had previously been laid upon the peasantry. For one thing, the costs of war under Edward III had far surpassed those under both his father and grandfather. Between 1344 and 1347, the wardrobe accounts alone came to £242,162.¹² M. Postan, arguing that the warfare budgets tripled or even quadrupled between the first and fourth decades of the fourteenth century, claims that the economy did not match the growth of the budgets. "National production and national income were not rising, but if anything falling, and this meant that the destruction of wealth by the War remained uncompensated and that England was getting poorer."¹³ Ormrod has estimated that all wartime income raised by Edward I in 1294–7 equaled approximately £450,000, while the income raised by Edward III in 1337–41 approached £665,000. These figures led Ormrod to conclude, "the total cost of taxation on the laity during the opening stages of the Hundred Years' War considerably outweighed the levies taken by Edward I in the mid-1290s."¹⁴

All demands that the king laid on the peasantry were generally greeted with protest. Taxation and purveyance, the two predominant economic demands on the peasantry in times of war, became more severe as time progressed, leading to a huge increase in the number of royal officials required to carry out the king's orders and thus a greater intrusion into people's lives. As the number of officials grew and their powers and authority were gradually increased, so did the probability of abuse. The corruption of these royal officials made the demands particularly odious, as the administration of the king's orders gave the officials "opportunities to enrich themselves at the expense of those least able to protect themselves."¹⁵ The most common abuse by tax collectors was that of concealment, in which the official levied a higher amount on the people than what was due the king and pocketed the difference.¹⁶

¹² Michael Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and State in England 1272–1377* (London: Routledge, 1990), 179.

¹³ Michael Postan, "Some Social Consequences of the Hundred Years War" in his *Essays on Medieval Agriculture and General Problems of the Medieval Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 53.

¹⁴ Ormrod, "The Crown and the English Economy," 183.

¹⁵ Prestwich, *The Three Edwards*, 31–2.

¹⁶ Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes*, 214.

Purveyance, as mentioned above, was a particular cause of immense complaint. Evidence from court records has led W. R. Jones to conclude in his discussion on purveyance that “public opinion seems to have held that purveyance was inherently oppressive and riddled with corruption.”¹⁷ As if the forced sale or seizure of large quantities of goods—especially in the few years preceding 1341—was not oppressive enough by itself, the fact that the Crown seemed unable to control its representatives made the practice often unbearable. Corruption was rife. Sellers were commonly forced to take credit, which was often never converted into cash. Often invalid licenses to purvey goods were used, or a single license used unjustly to gather victuals from multiple villages, or victuals would be collected repeatedly from the same village as the official failed to record the first collection. The main criticisms of purveyance, however, were that purveyors often refused to pay full market value; only paid for a portion of the goods taken, if they paid at all, and normally with long delays; or used purveyance as opportunities for self-enrichment.¹⁸ The Crown’s reliance upon the peasantry for large-scale purveyance tapered off after about 1340 in favor of contracts with merchants.¹⁹ In 1362, more as a result of the complaints about and resentment towards purveyance than a lack of efficiency of the system, Edward III finally agreed to abandon it.²⁰

Court records provide an obvious source for investigating complaints over wartime demands. Beginning in the mid 1290s, peasant appeals against the king’s officers and ministers in matters of abuses—pertaining especially to purveyance and tax collecting—and of monies demanded for the raising and support of troops, became quite frequent. By 1298, there had been so many complaints regarding the abuses of the officials that Edward I instructed special commissions to be established in the various counties for the purpose of hearing

¹⁷ W. R. Jones, “Purveyance for War and the Community of the Realm in Late Medieval England,” *Albion* 7 (1975): 306.

¹⁸ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 15.

¹⁹ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 66.

²⁰ Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants and Markets*, 223. This being said, however, household purveyance continued to be used well beyond this date, only to become the subject of severe tensions under the Tudor and especially Stuart monarchs. For an excellent study of late medieval household purveyance see C. Given-Wilson, “Purveyance for the Royal Household, 1362–1413,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 56 (1983): 145–65.

them. He promised that “sheriffs, clerks, bailiffs and other such ministers shall answer for their subordinates who have made such prises” and that “he will take measures for reasonable compensation to be made.”²¹ However, the complaints, and obviously the abuses, did not stop. Edward II issued no less than 31 large-scale inquests into the behavior of his officials during his twenty-year reign, to little avail and little effect. He also approved the inquest of countless individuals accused of abusing their offices throughout his reign. Often between five and ten such local investigations would occur in a single year, as well as one or two larger and more general inquests, an indication of the widespread problem of official corruption. Edward III had no better success, and even his grand sweeping investigations, most notably those of 1340 and 1341, could not decisively alter the situation.

Lincolnshire provides a good opportunity to study such complaints within the context of local or micro-history. Two complete edited rolls survive from Lincolnshire: an assize roll of 1298 that illustrates numerous protests regarding various issues, often relating the outcome of the court decisions, and the 1341 royal inquest into the behavior of the royal officials. Both rolls illustrate not only the prevalence of corruption among such officials but also the recourse the peasantry had to voicing their unhappiness.

The 1298 assize roll demonstrates the full range of grievances that were connected to war. Unlike the inquest performed half a century later, the assize roll contains more varied complaints. Besides the corruption of officials, grievances were brought up regarding levies for the infantry, royal protections from taxation and purveyance (including officials’ disregard for and violation of them), and the fact that the king ordered purveyances without popular support or permission. For example, Simon of Worth accused Ralph Notebroun of taking an ox, later retaining his palfrey and horse, and taking 14d to spare his grain from seizure, in spite of the fact that Simon held a protection from the king.²² The roll displays very typical complaints of corrupt officials, most commonly within the context of tax collecting and purveyance. One sub-collector of taxes in particular, Alan

²¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls: Edward I*, vol. 2 (London: H. M. S. O. 1893–1901), 338–9.

²² *A Lincolnshire Assize Roll for 1298*, ed. Walter S. Thomson (Hereford: Lincoln Record Society, 1944), nos. 62–4, pp. 14–17.

ad Ecclesiam, made himself quite hated. Besides unjustly taking 6d to excuse William Scales from service in Scotland,²³ he is also responsible for having retained portions of several taxes for himself, taxed at 12d non-taxable possessions of Simon son of William son of Robert,²⁴ and taxed Robert East, a poor man, for a twelfth while sparing Robert Scales, whose possessions should have been taxed at 2s.²⁵ Richard Brinkle collected 5s from the village of Skegness to support troops, which he retained for himself.²⁶ He also unjustly collected 4s from the village of Ingoldmells so that the inhabitants might not be called for service in Wales.²⁷ Robert Benet of Bulby and Richard ad Ecclesiam took too much grain, valued at 18d, from the village of Bulby, which they kept for themselves.²⁸ Thomas of Easton, the bailiff of Ness, measured by heaped rather than level bushels, to the damage of 12s.²⁹

In his introduction to the 1341 inquest, Bernard McLane states emphatically that the wartime demands between 1334 and 1340 “provided royal and local officials with [...] unprecedented opportunities to profit illegally at the expense of both the Crown and the local communities.”³⁰ Not surprisingly, the inquest is filled with grievances against royal and local officials, about 6 percent of the total. Of the 784 complaints against officials, the most common accusation was for extortion (57%), followed by complaints for goods illegally taken or not paid for (42%), and miscellaneous misconduct (1%). Not all the complaints dealt with misdemeanors related to specific wartime demands, but the majority did, as can be seen in the high number of royal officials indicted.

The complaints brought to court in 1341 often related to purveyance: instances of seizures of goods without payment, under-valuation or imprecise measurement of goods taken and hence underpayment, taking more than was either required or recorded, masquerading as purveyors, and all sorts of intimidation, extortion and violence applied

²³ *Lincolnshire Assize Roll*, no. 271, pp. 60–1.

²⁴ *Lincolnshire Assize Roll*, no. 274, p. 60.

²⁵ *Lincolnshire Assize Roll*, no. 272, p. 60.

²⁶ *Lincolnshire Assize Roll*, no. 267, pp. 58–9.

²⁷ *Lincolnshire Assize Roll*, no. 269, p. 59.

²⁸ *Lincolnshire Assize Roll*, no. 315, p. 72.

²⁹ *Lincolnshire Assize Roll*, no. 371, pp. 91–2.

³⁰ *The 1341 Royal Inquest in Lincolnshire*, ed. Bernard William McLane (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press for the Lincoln Record Society, 1988), x.

by the officials. This is not surprising, as Lincolnshire was one of the most heavily and frequently purveyed counties under Edward III. There are examples of people waiting years to be repaid. In 1317, Nicholas Wulston and Richard de Meyrhel still had not been paid for pigs taken by the bailiff of Samford during Edward I's reign, nor had Hugh Thamlemach received payment for an ox carcass, or William for three quarters of wheat.³¹

It appears that some of the greatest offenders were royal officials charged with procuring horses for the king or victuals for those horses, as many cases were brought against them. For example, in 1334, keepers of the king's horses were accused of the following:

Extort[ing] large ransoms from men of the towns in the county [Bedford] to spare them from prises, tak[ing] prises from other men with false tallies, converting the money so received to their own use, plunder[ing] merchants at fairs and markets on the like pretence and otherwise [being] daily guilty of very grievous oppressions and damage, contrary to the form of statutes of purveyance made in the time of Edward I, and in the fourth and fifth year of the present reign.³²

Likewise, in 1339, Roger Mynot of Wath was accused of having stolen two horses for the king's use without warrant, accompanied by further purveyances and extortions.³³ Later that year, there appear to have been people masquerading as purveyors in Lincoln, who extorted money and horses.³⁴ In 1344, William de Brampton, purveyor of victuals for the king's horses, was accused in court of several crimes:

Mak[ing] very many purveyances in [Middlesex, Essex and Hertford] beyond what should reasonably suffice for those horses without appreciation or tallies or other satisfaction made, and sell[ing] the same in gross and in retail for his own profit, extort[ing] divers sums from townships as well as from individuals [. . .] by force and by colour of his said office [. . .] and [committing] other oppressions to the king's disgrace.³⁵

³¹ *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous*, vol. 2 (London: H. M. S. O., 1916), 76.

³² *Calendar of Patent Rolls: Edward III*, vol. 2 (London: H. M. S. O., 1891–1914), 577.

³³ *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, vol. 4, 358–9.

³⁴ *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, vol. 4, 361.

³⁵ *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, vol. 6, 287.

Certain officials made themselves much hated in diverse regions, as they appear numerous times in the records. In 1344, men in Oxford and Berkshire complained of a certain Thomas of Pontefract, also purveyor of victuals for the king's horses, who had taken far greater quantities of grain than needed, failed to pay, extorted money from some to spare them from the purveyance, sold some of his collected yield for profit and had made threats or levied fines. Early the next year, he appears again on the same charges in Cambridge and Huntingdon. In 1330, the sheriff in Somerset and Dorset was accused of levying five hundred quarters of wheat and three hundred pigs, theoretically for the king's use. However, for every twenty bushels he granted them only sixteen, keeping the other four for himself, and would pay merely 10d per bushel while selling it later for 1s 3d per bushel.³⁶

Officials did not use their power simply for lining their own pockets; they could flaunt their authority, affording *protectia* for their friends or supporters. For example, when the methods for assessing taxes were changed in 1334, and communities rather than individuals assumed responsibility for providing a specified amount, local officials were given greater control in assessing each individual's share of the total. This also provided more opportunities for abuse. Since at this time the protective clause that had hitherto exempted the poorest residents from paying taxes—normally those whose possessions were assessed at less than 10s—was dropped,³⁷ there were more people contributing to the tax payment, although the bulk of the burden shifted from the richer to the poorer inhabitants. As Maddicott pointed out, if a wealthier member of the village with more political clout shirked their part of the total amount, it was not the king who lost out but the rest of the village, as the difference would have to be made up by the other residents. It is certainly clear from surviving complaints that the poorer members of the village were forced to bear the burden of paying the tax when a wealthier individual refused to pay his share.³⁸ Such was the case in 1341 in the village

³⁶ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 27.

³⁷ Although the normally cited amount is 10s. (e.g. Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 51), the amount varied according to the percentage of the tax. For a full list of the downward limits established for determining exemption from taxation, see *Lincolnshire Assize Roll*, xlvii.

³⁸ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 50–2.

of Bilsby, Lincolnshire, when the taxer, Peter Mandeville, exempted both himself and his brother Robert, the richest man in the village, from the tax.³⁹

One of the bitterest attacks against purveyance was a treatise written in about 1331 entitled *De Speculo Regis Edwardi III*, both a condemnation of the practices of the purveyors and an entreaty for the king to mend his ways and those of his officers. Originally thought to have been composed by Simon Islip, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the *De Speculo* more recently has been attributed to William of Pagula, a Berkshire parish priest and prolific writer of treatises who obtained a doctorate in Canon Law in 1320.⁴⁰ In the treatise, the crimes of the king's officers are clearly presented, often with anecdotes. They are repeatedly accused of the same felonies for which they are seen answering in court: namely, failing to pay for goods they took, undervaluing the goods and hence paying less than they should, threatening or intimidating peasants through violence into handing over grain or animals, extortion, taking more than necessary, masquerading as purveyors by using fake licenses, failing to issue tallies, and recording less than actually taken. They are referred to as *latrones*, or robbers, or specifically as *garciones*, indicating that the author believed it was the king's grooms who were often at fault. He blames them for all sorts of misery suffered by the peasantry. He tells Edward that because of his purveyors, many of the poor do not have enough grain with which to seed their fields⁴¹ and are saddened whilst the purveyors feast and rejoice.⁴² Besides the seed, the purveyors take needed animals, such as plough beasts.⁴³ One particularly upsetting account is of a man who was taking his cow to market to sell so that he might pay off a debt. The king's ministers seized the cow without paying anything and as a consequence the man, bereft of income and unable to pay his debt, lost his land.⁴⁴ Another example

³⁹ 1341 *Royal Inquest in Lincolnshire*, no. 564, p. 55.

⁴⁰ See Leonard Boyle, "William of Pagula and the *Speculum Regis Edwardi III*," *Mediaeval Studies* 32 (1970): 329–36.

⁴¹ "Et propter hujusmodi extorsiones, multi pauperes non habebunt unde possunt terras suas seminare." *De Speculo Regis Edwardi III*, ed. Joseph Moisant (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1891), 94.

⁴² "Et de hiis communiter faciunt festa sua et gaudent, et populus tristatur." *De Speculo*, 94.

⁴³ *De Speculo*, 132.

⁴⁴ *De Speculo*, 99.

is of a young groom who demanded room and board for himself and his horse, requiring the best food and drink and racking up a bill of 8d or 10d. However, as the groom had only been given an allowance of little more than 2d, the peasant host was forced to suffer a loss. But, the author also affirms that if all grooms were like this one it would be fine as something is better than nothing.⁴⁵ Because people are afraid to lose everything, when they hear of the king's approach they hide their goods.⁴⁶ William repeatedly asserts that the actions of the purveyors are not only against the wishes of the people, the lords, and the duty of the king—whose job it is to protect the populace—but also against God. The king himself is reproached, reminded of the wrath of God, who does not look kindly on thieves and plunderers, and informed that anything he receives is merely extortion.⁴⁷ He is warned to stop the injustices of his officials lest there be an uprising as there was in his father's time.⁴⁸ An even stronger rebuke calls the king a "ravager of the state and destroyer of the kingdom and government."⁴⁹

Besides court documents, another genre that is very useful in assessing contemporary public opinion is political songs, lyrics and poems. A certain amount of caution must be employed when utilizing this body of writing as straightforward evidence, as literature, especially that which is somewhat formulaic, is by no means objective and may be prone to exaggeration. With this in mind, however, the literature helps bring to light the general attitudes and emotions not revealed in the court rolls and other statistical data. Although issues of authorship and audience of this body of literature have not been resolved satisfactorily despite the fair amount of ink spilled regarding this question, it may be assumed that the voices behind the texts echo sentiments expressed by the lower classes. Indeed, it has been argued that the anonymous authors were not only intimately familiar with the realities of peasant life, but also thoroughly sympathetic to their plight; a convincing argument promotes the lesser clergy as the most

⁴⁵ "Sed si omnes garciones tue curie sic facerent, adhuc aliquantulum bonum esset, quia melius foret habere aliquid quam nichil." *De Speculo*, 107.

⁴⁶ "Cum aliquid audiunt de tuo adventu tristantur, et pre timore abscondunt aucas, gallinas et cetera bona." *De Speculo*, 133.

⁴⁷ *De Speculo*, 99.

⁴⁸ *De Speculo*, 96.

⁴⁹ "Talis rex est depopulator reipublice et destructor regni et regiminis." *De Speculo*, 140.

likely candidate.⁵⁰ For the period covered by this paper, the bulk of the poems fall into the category of “complaint” or “protest” literature, which, as Thomas Elliott points out in his discussion about such works, “most often deal[s] with kingship, the economy (especially the distribution of wealth), and the Church.”⁵¹ This body of literature came into existence at the very end of the thirteenth century and continued beyond the period covered in this article. Important issues broached, which are relevant to this discussion, included taxation, purveyance, military obligation, and the corruption of officials. For the purposes of this study, five poems will be investigated: *The Song of the Husbandman*, *Trailebaston*, *A Song on the Times*, *The Simonie or On the Evil Times of Edward II*, and *Against the King’s Taxes*.

The Song of the Husbandman is generally agreed to date to the first decade of the fourteenth century. In it, the protagonist complains about the hardships of his life, blaming his sorrowful situation on the weather, his lord’s exactions, and the demands of the Crown. He complains that every fourth penny must go to the king,⁵² that tax officials rob the poor,⁵³ and then speaks of his own pitiful existence. He claims he has paid his tax more than ten times, and must sell his animals, his grain while it is still growing, and even his seed corn in order to cover his tax. Mournfully he says, “To seek silver for the king I sold my seed, for which my land lies fallow and learns to sleep. Since they snatched my fair cattle in my fold, when I think of my weal I almost weep.”⁵⁴ Here the corruption seen in the court records is made poetic in the words of a—possibly—stereotypical peasant.

Peter Langtoft described the practice of exacting fines and taking goods for purveyance in his *Chronicle*, dated to c. 1310, and denounced

⁵⁰ For a full discussion on the possible attribution, see Maddicott, “Poems of Social Protest” in *England in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. W. M. Ormrod (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1986), 130–44.

⁵¹ Thomas Elliott, “Middle English Complaints Against the Times: To Condemn the World or to Reform it?” *Annuaire Mediaevale* 14 (1973): 34.

⁵² *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, ed. Rossell Hope Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 7; *Thomas Wright’s Political Songs of England*, ed. Peter Coss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 149.

⁵³ *Thomas Wright’s Political Songs*, 150.

⁵⁴ “To seche selver to the kyng y mi seed solde, Forthi mi lond leye lith ant leorneth to slepe. Seththe he mi feire feh fatte y my folde, When y thenk o mi weole wel neh y wepe.” *Thomas Wright’s Political Songs*, 152.

the officials, called Trailebastons, who were boorish in carrying out the king's orders:

People of good will have made answer to the King, how a great grievance is made in the land by common squabblers, who are by oath obliged together to a purveyance; this company are called Trailebastons, they offer to make conventions at fairs and markets, for three or four shillings, or merely to show their courage, to beat a good man, who never did hurt to any Christian body, by the testimony of no one. If a man contradict any one of the alliance, or a merchant will not trust them for his merchandise, taken in his own house, without other interference, he shall be well beaten, or by agreement he shall give of his money and take acquittance.⁵⁵

A slightly earlier poem in French, *Trailebaston*, more passionately condemns the legalization of purveyance, speaking out especially violently against its executors, and warns those merchants who have taken credit from the king's officials in exchange for their goods that it is worthless:

Well may merchants and monks bestow a curse
On all those who ordained the Trailebaston;
The royal protection will not be worth a garlic to them,
If they do not repay the pence without recompense.⁵⁶

The poem entitled merely *A Song on the Times* and dated to about 1308 by Thomas Wright laments broadly about the corruption of the king's ministers. The author accuses them of not abiding by the law but rather accepting bribes and committing trespasses. He claims that if a lawful man dies, the ministers do not note it but simply divide up his land and belongings between themselves.⁵⁷

One of the most biting critical poems of the fourteenth century, entitled *The Simonie or On the Evil Times of Edward II* and written between 1330 and 1340, touches upon almost every aspect of life for which man could have a grievance. *The Simonie* makes very negative remarks about the reality of taxation, in that the poor get poorer and the rich get richer through the inequality of the system:

⁵⁵ Translation by Thomas Wright. *Thomas Wright's Political Songs*, 319–20.

⁵⁶ "Bien devoient marchaunz e moygnes doner maliçoun/ A tout iceux que ordinerent le Traillebastoun;/ Ne lur vaudra un ayle le roial proteccioun,/ Que il ne rendront les deners sauntz regerdoun." Translation by Thomas Wright. *Thomas Wright's Political Songs*, 234.

⁵⁷ "Be the lafful man to death i-broht, And his catel awei y-nom; Of his deth ne tellith hi noht, Bot of har prei hi hab som." *Thomas Wright's Political Songs*, 197.

If the king in his land levies a tax,
 And every man is assessed at a certain amount,
 It shall be pinched to pieces, labored away and twitted away [. . .]
 A man worth forty pounds is levied 12d.
 A man brought to the ground by poverty, with a bunch of daughters
 Sitting on the ground must also pay this amount.
 God's curse must they have! But that is well said and sworn,
 That the poor are thus robbed and the rich left alone.⁵⁸

In the realm of military service, *The Simonie* again reveals how rich men often bribe their way out of service, while the poorer men, who are needed more urgently in the fields, have no recourse. While “the poor men are summoned to war, the rich men sit at home and watch their silver rise.”⁵⁹ It points out how this not only works to the disadvantage of the common people, but also of the king. According to the poem, the king will be left with the least capable fighting men, the strongest having paid 10s or 12s to exempt themselves from service.⁶⁰ Like the *Song of the Husbandman*, *The Simonie* speaks out against the tyranny and corruption of the royal officials. The author sees a great majority of the money taken ending up not in the king's purse but in those of his tax collectors and advises the king to look closer to home if he wishes to recover more revenue. The tax collectors are all corrupt, taking their own share before the king gets any. The king is left with the smallest share and, unjustly, with the entire ill will of the peasantry.⁶¹

Originally dated by Wright to the third decade of Edward I's reign, *Against the King's Taxes* has been redated by Isobel Aspin to the beginning of Edward III's reign. As the poem refers to the king as a “jeovene bachiler,” a twenty-five-year-old Edward III fits the description better than a fifty-eight-year-old Edward I. Furthermore,

⁵⁸ *Thomas Wright's Political Songs*, 337.

⁵⁹ *Thomas Wright's Political Songs*, 338.

⁶⁰ “If the king in his were sent after mihti men, To helpe him in his need, of sum toun .ix. or .x., The stiffeste sholen bileve at hom for .x. shillings or .xii., And sende forth a wrecche that may noht helpe himselfe at need.” *Thomas Wright's Political Songs*, 336–7.

⁶¹ “Ac were the king wel avised, and wolde worche bi skile, Litel nede sholde he have swiche pore to pile; Thurfte him noht seke tresor so fer, he mihte finde ner, At justices, at shirreves, cheiturs, and chaunceler, and the les; Swiche mihte finde him i-nogh, and late pore men have pes[. . .]Ac shrewedeliche for soothe hii don the kinges heste; Whan everi man hath his part, the king hath the leste. Everi man is aboute to fille his owen purs; And the king hath the leste part, and he hath al the curs, wid wronge.” *Thomas Wright's Political Songs*, 338.

as Aspin points out, “the annual recurrence of the fifteenth is more in keeping with the later than the earlier date [and] the dishonesty of tax collectors, the theme of the fourth stanza, was the occasion for a commission appointed in July 1335.”⁶² The seventeen-stanza poem provides very specific details regarding the demands placed on the peasantry by the Crown and the toll those demands took. The author grumbles that the tax of a fifteenth is levied each year, forcing the common folk to sell animals, utensils, and even clothing in order to be able to pay. To add insult to injury, the author angrily relates how the officials keep most of the money for themselves, so that the king is forced to levy even more taxes to get what he needs. The taxes on movables, however, are not as burdensome as the levy on wool, which, the author complains, forces men to sell their possessions. Again, the officials retain much of the yield for themselves. The author suggests that the king would be better off collecting from the rich rather than relying on the poor. At the end of the poem, the author refers to the hated practice of purveyance, claiming, “it would be better to eat from wooden platters and pay in coin for food, than to serve the body with silver and give pledges of wood.”⁶³

Thus we are left with the numerous testimonies and literary accounts of hardship caused by corrupt officials and practices. The sources generally concur with the view that it was these unseen additional exactions that made the demands overwhelming. However, one must keep in mind that demands rarely came in isolation. As Maddicott points out, “military service, the levy on movables, and purveyance were cumulative in the hardships which they brought, and each was aggravated by the abuses with which it was accompanied.”⁶⁴ If, as is stated by the Husbandman in his poem, peasants could have their livelihood damaged or even destroyed by the levying of a tax, seizure of plough beasts for purveyance, or the forced sale of grain, one can only assume the severely economically depressing effect upon the peasantry of corrupt practices combined with these other demands.

⁶² *Anglo-Norman Political Songs*, ed. Isabel Aspin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), 106.

⁶³ “Mieu valdreit de fust ma[n]ger, pro victu nummos dare,/ Qu d’argent le cors servyr et lignum pacare.” Translation by Isobel Aspin. *Anglo-Norman Political Songs*, 111 and 113.

⁶⁴ Maddicott, *English Peasantry*, 45.

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PART THREE

UNTO THE BREACH:
RE-EXAMINING ISSUES IN MEDIEVAL AND
MODERN MILITARY HISTORIOGRAPHY

THE MILITARY REVOLUTION AND THE EARLY ISLAMIC STATE

Hugh Kennedy

Military revolutions are one of the staple paradigms of political history. The argument is usually that changes in technology mean that a new sort of military equipment and training is required. Almost always this is more expensive and needs different social and financial structures to support it. The new technology leads to the growth of new systems of government. Such revolutions can be discerned in discussions of the emergence of the mailed knight in early Medieval Europe and the concomitant emergence of feudalism, the changes in warfare in Europe in the sixteenth century that fostered the growth of the early modern state and the emphasis on the growth of government in response to the demands of the military during the First World War. These are only a few examples of the working out of the idea that technological change is the driving force in the evolution of political society. The purpose of this article is to examine the possibility that technological changes in warfare had a marked effect on the evolution of the early Islamic state.

The Muslim conquests of the seventh and early eighth centuries were one of the most extensive and successful military campaigns in history. Although there were hard fought battles, Arab armies were almost always victorious and their opponents overwhelmed. There is no evidence, however, that these victories were the result of superior military technology. The Muslim armies of the conquests essentially fought on foot.¹ They moved to the battlefield on horses and camels, and the use of riding beasts certainly gave them advantages of surprise and mobility. The references in the literature to soldiers hamstringing their horses to show that they were not going to flee²

¹ Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001) 10, 24–6.

² See for example Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa'l-Muluk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1879–1901) 3: 852–54, when in 812 the freedmen of Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Muhallabi dismount to face the enemy and hamstring (Ar. *'arqabu*) their horses as a sign of their determination to fight and

may only be a topos but it does demonstrate that they intended to fight on foot: to immobilise your horses when you were intending to use them for cavalry warfare would not be an intelligent move. The weapons with which they fought were swords and spears and what seem to have been fairly simple bows and arrows. From the time of the Prophet it seems as if some men, but probably only a small proportion, had body armor, though the vocabulary is usually too vague for us to be able to determine whether this was lamellar armor, chain mail or some combination of both. In short, it was not superior technology that gave the Muslim armies military superiority but superior organisation, morale and mobility.

During the course of the first three Islamic centuries it seems as if two major innovations were made in military equipment: the first was the use of stirrups and the second was the development of mounted archery and more generally of cavalry warfare. The second development, mounted archery, must have benefited from the first use of stirrups but was not entirely dependent on it.

Stirrups seem to the modern observer to be such a simple and obvious invention and so much of the natural way of riding horses that it is hard to believe that they were not always around.³ However, the absence of any mention in classical texts, and the clear evidence of classical sculpture and Sasanian silver, show that stirrups were not used. Even the Sasanian monarchs, in all their panoply and crowned glory, ride with their toes pointed down and hanging free. There are illustrations from wall-paintings in Afrosiyab/Old Samarkand that show round stirrups.⁴ These probably date from around 700, shortly before the Muslim conquest. There is no evidence in either Europe or the Middle East for the use of stirrups before the end of the seventh century.

Arabic literary sources suggest that the appearance of stirrups among Muslim armies first occurred during the struggles between the forces of al-Muhallab ibn Abi Sufra, fighting on behalf of the

die with their master: "You freed us from slavery, raised us up from humiliation and enriched us after we were poor," they said "shall we then abandon you in this state? No we will go forward in front of you and die beneath the stirrup of your horse!"

³ For the classic discussion of the origin of stirrups, Lynn White, *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 11–28.

⁴ C. Silvi Antonini, "The Paintings in the Palace of Afrasiab (Samarkand)," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 63 (1989): 109–144.

Umayyads, and the Azariq Kharijis in Fars in south-west Iran.⁵ A ninth century source, the *Kamil* of al-Mubarrad (d. 898), specifically links the invention of iron stirrups to Muhallab himself: “stirrups were first made of wood,” he explains, “and so they broke very easily, with the result that whenever the warrior wished to brandish his sword, or the lancer to strike with his spear, he had no support. As a result, al-Muhallab ordered that they be made of iron. He thus became the first person to have stirrups made of iron.”⁶

The invention of stirrups was also discussed by al-Jahiz (d. 868) in the context of a debate between Persians and Arabs about the superiority of their traditional cultures. The Persian tells the Arab the following:

You were accustomed to ride your horses in battle bare-back, and whenever a horse did have a saddle on its back, it was made of leather but had no stirrups. But stirrups are among the best trappings of war for both the lancer who wields his spear and the swordsman who brandishes his sword, since they may stand in them or use them as support.

Al-Jahiz concludes: “As to stirrups, it is agreed that they are very old, but iron stirrups were not used by the Arabs before the days of the Azraqites.”⁷

In his book, *Medieval Technology and Social Change*, Lynn White argued that the coming of stirrups had an important effect on the development of western European armies and society. He suggested that the early Carolingian leader, Charles Martel, may have learned about them from the Arabs he defeated at the Battle of Poitiers in 732 and that he realized that this new invention gave the cavalry an overwhelming advantage. Charles Martel then went on to confiscate church lands to supply fiefs for these newly-empowered knights and this led directly to the development of western European feudalism. He concluded his discussion with the memorable formulation, “the man on horseback as we have known him for the past millennium was made possible by the stirrup, which joined man and steed into

⁵ White, *Medieval Technology*, 18–19, 142. See also Kennedy, *Armies*, 171–3 for a discussion of the evidence, both literary and archeological, for the appearance of stirrups in the Muslim world.

⁶ Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Mubarrad, *The Kamil of El-Mubarrad*, ed. W. Wright (Leipzig: G. Kreysing, 1864), 1: 642.

⁷ Al-Jahiz, *Al-Bayan wa'l-Tabyin*, ed. Hasan al-Sandubi (Cairo: al-Matba‘a al-Tijariya al-Kubra, 1926–27), 3: 8, 12.

fighting organism. Antiquity imagined the centaur; the early Middle Ages made him the master of Europe.”⁸

The argument was simple and elegant but soon came under attack.⁹ White was criticized for the use of his sources and it emerged that the links between the development of cavalry and Charles Martel were very tendentious and that the emergence of the mounted knight as the dominant figure on the battlefield, if it occurred at all, was a much more gradual and evolutionary process. These criticisms were not answered in detail by White with the result that his thesis has been generally discredited. However, in his defense it must be accepted that in the early Middle Ages there were no stirrups and armies fought largely on foot but that by the eleventh century, the mounted knight was a major figure, both in military operations and in the wider society of the period, and that all mounted knights used stirrups to provide support when they wanted to charge with their lances or fight with their swords. White may have attempted to be too precise about the timing and personalities involved, but it is hard to believe that the two processes were not connected in some way.

When we come to looking at the evidence from the Middle East, we may be on firmer ground.¹⁰ The detailed criticisms that have undermined White’s theories about the development of military society in Western Europe do not apply to the Arab literary evidence, which is, as we have seen, both clear and specific, stressing the newness of the adoption of iron stirrups and their utility. There can be no doubt that once they had appeared, they were universally adopted. The mounted archer on the wall-painting from the late Umayyad palace of Qasr al-Hayr West (c. 730)¹¹ and the mounted archer on the silver repoussé dish from Khurasan now in the Hermitage (7th–9th century)¹² are both clearly using their stirrups to provide support.¹³ In the clear and numerous images of mounted warriors in Persian

⁸ White, *Medieval Technology*, 38.

⁹ The debate is conveniently summarized in Kelly DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), 95–110.

¹⁰ For the visual evidence see the excellent illustrations in D. Nicolle, “Arms of the Umayyad Era,” in *War and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Y. Lev (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 9–100.

¹¹ D. Schlumberger, *Qasr El-Heir El Gharbi* (Paris: Librairie orientale P. Geuthner, 1986), pl. 34.

¹² Nicolle, “Arms”, no. 62.

¹³ Nicolle, “Arms”, nos. 12, 75.

painting from the early fourteenth century onwards, mounted warriors, whether archers or lancers, invariably use stirrups. It must have been their utility and indispensability that ensured their universal acceptance: we hear of nobody who thought they were better off without.

It would be wrong to suggest that the adoption of the stirrup was the cause of the cavalry revolution in Muslim armies, but it can be argued that the stirrup gave a significant advantage to the horse-riding soldier. It must also have made mounted archery much easier. The firing of arrows from a fast moving horse, which the rider must be able to control without the use of his hands, can never have been easy. Anyone who has ever tried to take photographs or use a camera on the back of a moving horse will have some idea of the problems, but these were vastly exaggerated by the need to pull a heavy bow and aim effectively. Mounted archery had often been practiced in antiquity. The Parthians, whose Parthian shots fired backwards from a retreating horse so disconcerted the Romans, are an example of this. Sasanian monarchs are often portrayed hunting with bow and arrow. But mounted archers never became elite troops; both Sasanian and Byzantine armies in antiquity developing the heavily armored cataphract instead.

As has already been noted, early Islamic armies fought largely on foot. The 'Abbasid forces under 'Abd Allah ibn 'Ali that defeated the forces of the last Umayyad caliph Marwan II at the battle on the Zab in 750 seem to have won their decisive victory because of their skill and discipline as foot soldiers, dismounting and pointing their spears towards the enemy who advanced towards them on horses. According to one purportedly eyewitness account of the battle, one of the Umayyad commanders broke ranks and began to charge the 'Abbasid soldiers on horseback.¹⁴ "Musa ibn Ka'b said to 'Abd Allah (ibn 'Ali, the 'Abbasid commander). 'Order the troops to dismount!' At this the cry went out, 'To the ground!' The troops dismounted and extended their lances as while they knelt down to engage the enemy." All this required discipline and nerve; on that fateful day, the Khurasani troops of the 'Abbasids had it, while the

¹⁴ Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 3: 40-1. This translation is based on J. A. Williams, *The Abbasid Revolution: The History of al-Tabari, Volume XXVII* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985) with some amendments.

Syrians did not. "As the battle grew fiercer, Marwan shouted to the Quda'a (tribesmen) 'Dismount,' but (they refused) and said, 'tell that to the Banu Sulaym; they can dismount [. . .] He ordered his chief of security (*Sahib al-Shurta*) to dismount but he refused saying, 'No, by God, I will never make myself a target!' Another member of the army recalled, "We met Marwan at the (river) Zab and the Syrians attacked us as if they were a mountain of iron; then we knelt and pointed our lances at them and they turned from us like a cloud". And so the ranks of the Syrian cavalry broke against the spear-wall of the 'Abbasid army and the history of the Muslim world was changed forever. But it was also the last occasion on which the infantry were to dominate a major battle.

It is not clear exactly when the infantry began to lose control of the battlefield, but we may be able to suggest a plausible scenario. In the summer of 811, relations between the two sons of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid had reached breaking point. Al-Amin, who bore the title of caliph and ruled Baghdad and the west, was determined to destroy his brother al-Ma'mun who ruled his share of the inheritance from Merv in Khurasan. He sent a large army East from Baghdad. They were magnificently equipped and are said to have numbered 60,000; people in Baghdad said it was the largest army they had ever seen. These men were known as the "Sons" (*abna'*) and many indeed were the sons and grandsons of those soldiers who had defeated Marwan's army on the Zab sixty-one years before. Al-Ma'mun and his supporters could not hope to match this enormous force, and his advisers were deeply pessimistic about his chances. However, he sent a small force of perhaps 3,000 men to the frontier city of Rayy under the command of a young Khurasani aristocrat called Tahir ibn al-Husayn. The differences in numbers may well have been exaggerated to emphasize the nearly miraculous nature of al-Ma'mun's victory, but there was clearly a substantial disparity.

The two armies, so unequal in numbers, met outside Rayy. Unfortunately our sources on the battle do not describe what happened in great detail, being more concerned with the fate of al-Amin's commander, 'Ali ibn 'Isa ibn Mahan, than with military tactics and equipment.¹⁵ It is clear, however, that the *abna'* were routed by the vastly smaller force, the commander was killed and

¹⁵ See Kennedy, *Armies*, 108–9.

they were scattered in disarray. Attempts to regroup under the leadership of the dead commander's son failed miserably. Clearly Tahir's forces had a military advantage and it is at least possible that the battle marks the moment when the cavalry of northeastern Iran, and the Turkish mounted archers in particular, were able to break the massed ranks of the foot soldiers of the *abna'*. Tahir's men swept on to victory in Iraq with a bold attack that enabled them to take Basra, Kufa and all the fertile lands of lower Iraq. It was only when they reached the outskirts of Baghdad (the residential and commercial quarters of the city were unwallled at this stage) that they were forced to halt and undertake a major siege.

It was only a few years after this triumph that a young 'Abbasid prince called Abu Ishaq, a younger son of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, began buying Turks to use as military slaves.¹⁶ Some he acquired in Baghdad, where they already worked in the houses of the great men of the 'Abbasid capital, others came from the great steppe lands of what is now Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan. In the years before he became caliph himself in 833 with the title of al-Mu'tasim, he acquired between three and five thousand of these Turks to serve in what became in effect his own private army. The support of this force was one of the factors that enabled him to seize power on the death of his brother, al-Ma'mun, and deprive al-Ma'mun's son of the succession to which he may well have felt he was entitled. Once he had become caliph, he embarked on a purge of other elite elements in the army, notably the eastern Iranian aristocrats like Afshin and others. He also constructed for his Turkish troops a new city, Samarra, where they could be allotted places to live and where their leaders, men like Itakh and Ashinas, could build extensive palaces. By the end of his reign, these Turks had come to constitute the military elite of the 'Abbasid state. Soon they were challenging the power of the caliphs themselves.

The numbers of these Turkish soldiers remains a matter of some dispute.¹⁷ Some recent estimates, based on archeological evidence, have suggested that there may have been as many as 100,000.

¹⁶ For the formation of the Turkish army, M. S. Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Military of Samarra* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 15–35.

¹⁷ On this see Kennedy, *Armies*, 205–8.

However the literary sources, which are both full and near-contemporary, suggest that the numbers were much smaller. At no time were more than 10,000 mentioned, and this was on an exceptional occasion when the Turks and their hangers-on mobilized in force to defend their privileges. Armies of up to 5,000 are reported and many military forces were much smaller. When the Turkish general, Musa ibn Bugha, led an army of Turks and others to reassert 'Abbasid control over Rayy in 867 he commanded exactly 2,443 men. The contrast with the 60,000 *abna'* who had marched to Rayy under the command of 'Ali ibn 'Isa ibn Mahan half a century before in 811 is striking. Of course there are a number of possible explanations for this change; by 867 the 'Abbasid caliphate was in severe financial difficulties and the areas under its direct control were drastically reduced. Nonetheless, the weight of evidence suggests that we are witnessing a real change here; the size of elite armies was greatly reduced, and whereas 50,000 had been a large army in the early Islamic period, by the late ninth century 5,000 was a significant military force. How then can we account for this change?

There are few detailed descriptions of field battles from the first century after the arrival of the Turks. It is true that we have long accounts of the second siege of Baghdad in February–December 865, but this was hardly the sort of combat in which mounted archers would excel.¹⁸ We also have long and detailed descriptions of the amphibious warfare conducted by the 'Abbasid forces under al-Muwaffaq against the Zanj in the waterways of southern Iraq between 870 and 883,¹⁹ but again there was not much scope for mounted archery in this sort of warfare.

Our evidence for the importance of mounted archery in this period comes more from literary sources than historical narratives. The most important of these is al-Jahiz's work on the Virtues of the Turks (*Manaqib al-Turk*).²⁰ This claims to be a dialogue set at the caliphal court, though not in the presence of the caliph himself, on the relative merits of the Turks as opposed to other groups of fighters. It

¹⁸ Kennedy, *Armies*, 134–6.

¹⁹ Kennedy, *Armies*, 153–6.

²⁰ Al-Jahiz, *Tria Opuscula Auctore Abu Othman Amr ibn Bahr al-Djahiz Basrensi*, ed. G. van Vloten (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1903, reprinted 1968), 1–56; English trans., W. M. Hutchins, "The Virtues of the Turks" in *Nine Essays of al-Jahiz* (New York: P. Lang, 1989), 175–218.

is clearly a literary work and much of the language is chosen for stylistic and rhetorical reasons, but al-Jahiz was a contemporary observer and much of his material is straightforward and explicit. He stresses the strengths of the Turks as horsemen. It is their skills as riders and their affinity with their animals that makes them such effective warriors. The hardiness they acquired from long hours in the saddle and the experience gained from learning to ride as soon as they could walk gave them military skills that no other group possessed. In short, the battlefields of Islam, from the mid-ninth century onwards, were dominated by cavalry often, though not always, of Turkish, steppe nomad origin.

Small numbers of these *ghulams* (pl. *ghilman*)²¹ formed the core of almost all professional armies. Powerful, speedy and ruthless, neither nomad horsemen nor peasant footsoldiers could match them. But this military effectiveness came at a price. The Turkish soldiers were, in a real sense, professional. They did not have jobs or trades in the cities where they were stationed, nor did they keep flocks and herds on which to subsist. Almost always they were outsiders, without families to support them or help them out in times of hardship. They were recruited as individuals, not as tribes, so there was no kinship system to support them. Their only friends were their fellow soldiers, who had the same needs and the same narrow resource base. They needed to be paid salaries, regularly and on time, or they would become restless and violent.

The professional position of these Turkish soldiers can be glimpsed in a text that gives a rare insight into the process of military training.²² This account describes how the mounted troops were reviewed by the caliph al-Mu'tadid (892–902) and his vizier, 'Ubayd Allah ibn Sulayman, with the clerks of the military pay office in attendance. The officers presented lists of the names of their soldiers then each one was required to ride and shoot at the *bijās* or quintain, a kind of target on top of a pole. If the man shot well and hit the target, or came near it, and sat firmly in his saddle, his name was

²¹ The word originally means "boy" or "page" but in the writings of this period it usually means a young slave soldier. The term *mamluk* did not come into general use to describe such men until the twelfth century.

²² Hilal al-Sabi, *Al-Wuzara', aw, Tuhfat al-Umara' fi Ta'rikh al-Wuzara'* ed. A. A. Farraj (Cairo: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1958), 17–19 and Kennedy, *Armies*, 156–8.

marked with a symbol for “excellent” and he received the highest rate of pay. Less competent soldiers were paid less or demoted to tax collecting and police duties. In this account we can see how valuable the skills of the mounted archer were and how these skills were rewarded by high status and generous pay.

The perils of recruiting and relying on these dangerous but effective soldiers became clear within a couple of generations of the first appearance of the Turkish soldiers in the armies of the caliphs. In the purpose built capital at Samarra, north of Baghdad, a group of Turks showed their ruthlessness by assassinating the caliph al-Mutawakkil in 861 because they were concerned that he was going to curtail their privileged status by bringing other groups into the military. From 861 until 870 four hapless caliphs succeeded, each trying to pay the Turks and each failing because there was never enough cash: only the first of them, al-Muntasir, died of natural causes.²³

At the root of the problem was the inability of the government to find vast sums of money on a regular basis. In good years, paying the army from the proceeds of taxation was feasible, and until the death of al-Mutawakkil in 861 it seems to have been accomplished without any major problems. After his death things began to go wrong very quickly. The chaotic situation in the capital meant that taxes were collected late or not at all, civil war meant that the countryside was devastated and yields were well below what they had been in the days of peace. Lack of control at the center meant that rich provinces like Egypt became effectively independent (in the case of Egypt, under the rule of Ibn Tulun, a second generation Turkish soldier) and no longer contributed to the expenses of the caliphs’ administration. Yet the soldiers still demanded their money.

After 870 the Turks and the ‘Abbasid government reached a sort of compromise. A reduced military establishment was maintained and paid for. During the reign of the child-caliph, al-Muqtadir (908–32), pressures began to build up again. The gradual inflation of numbers of both military and court officials, including the court of the Queen Mother and the harem, meant that resources were no longer sufficient to keep the people in the style that they expected.

²³ For the political history of these years, Hugh Kennedy, *The Courts of the Caliphs* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004), 261–96.

Vizier after vizier tried to square the circle and find the cash without making the swinging cuts in government expenditure that were necessary to restore the balance. Unpaid soldiers repeatedly rioted. The caliph was deposed by the army, reinstated and then finally killed in yet another mutiny.

The death of the unfortunate al-Muqtadir in 932 spelled the final demise of the old system. Experience had shown that the payment of the military by regular cash salaries was simply not possible. The downward spiral of disruption, leading to failure to collect revenues and concomitant further disruption, could not be broken.

It was against this background that the *iqtaʿ* was developed as a fiscal device for paying the military.²⁴ The old system had been, in a sense, a triangular one: money had been paid by tax-payers to the state who then paid it to the military in cash salaries. In many ways it was an ideal system: it gave the government real control over both revenues and the military. Under an efficient and conscientious regime, it could keep corruption and waste under control. The grant of the *iqtaʿ* simplified the process but was at the same time an admission of failure. Members of the military were assigned the rights to collect government revenues from certain areas and keep them to provide their own income. They did not become owners of the lands, just of the rights to collect taxes from them. In some ways this solved the problem. The armies' demands for pay no longer brought them into conflict with the rulers and their civil servants, as it was now up to them to collect their own dues. But there were many disadvantages in the new system. The soldiers' enjoyment of these rights remained very precarious; they could be removed at any time by the actions of a strong ruler or, more likely, the machinations of rival groups. In addition, there was no check on how much the soldiers and their agents could extract, especially from the agricultural peasantry.

There is a strong argument to suggest that the coming of new and expensive military technologies, in the form of the Turkish mounted archer, put an intolerable strain on the administrative systems that the early Muslim state had inherited from its Byzantine and Sasanian predecessors. Just as the coming of the equally expensive

²⁴ For the classic account of the origins of *iqtaʿ*, see C. Cahen, "L'évolution de l'*iqtaʿ* du IX^e au XIII^e siècle," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 8 (1953): 25–52.

mailed knight in the West meant that public revenues were granted to individuals and families, so in the East the military acquired direct rights over the produce of public taxation. But whereas in the West the comparative stability provided by hereditary succession and, by the twelfth century, primogeniture gave a continuity to what effectively became land ownership, in the Middle East, the precarious nature of tenure and the practice of importing new soldiers from outside the Muslim world meant that this sense of ownership never developed. While the western landholder often had an incentive to develop his assets for his own future enjoyment and the benefit of his descendants, his eastern counterpart was usually obliged to strip the assets as rapidly as he could, before they passed out of his hands. The revolution in military technology may have had a lot to answer for.

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BYZANTIUM, THE RELUCTANT WARRIOR*

Warren Treadgold

Not long ago I was asked to help design a Byzantine war game, and I needed to choose a Byzantine war to make the game about. From my war-gaming days long ago, I remembered that war-gamers like wars that ended in total victory for one side, like the American Civil War or the two world wars. Thinking over the many wars the Byzantines fought, I noticed something I had never fully realized before: that Byzantium seldom if ever fought a foreign war in which it sought total victory. The only wars the Byzantines usually wanted to win outright were civil wars.

This observation raises some questions about the Byzantines' attitude toward warfare. A good deal has been written on that topic in recent years, especially on whether the Byzantines had an idea of holy war; but none of the theories about what the Byzantines thought seems quite to fit how the Byzantines acted. Of course, like all of us, the Byzantines acted in ways that fell short of their expressed ideals; for example, that Byzantine texts consistently condemn adultery does not necessarily mean that the Byzantines never committed adultery. Yet the Byzantines' stated opinions about war are a good place to start examining what their attitudes toward warfare were.

I

I will begin with the views of St. Basil of Caesarea on warfare, because the Byzantines considered them authoritative. What St. Basil wrote is this:

* For historical orientation these notes refer largely to my own *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) since no other reference work is as comprehensive for the present purpose. For example, George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, rev. ed., trans. Joan Hussey (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969) mentions fewer than half of the civil wars listed in the Appendix to this paper.

Our fathers did not count killing in battle as murder; they granted pardon, it seems to me, to those who were defending the cause of righteousness and piety. Perhaps, however, it is best to advise those [soldiers], because their hands are not clean, to abstain for three years from communion only.¹

In this passage St. Basil seems somewhat conflicted. He did not consider killing in battle as being as bad as murder, and he was not absolutely sure it required penance at all. Three years' exclusion from the eucharist (though not from church) may seem harsh to us; but Basil imposed full excommunication for ten years on women who had had abortions, and full excommunication for thirty years on ordinary murderers.² Yet Basil was lenient only with killers in wars for "the cause of righteousness and piety." Even in such wars, the killing itself was by no means meritorious: the soldier's hands were still unclean. However, as long as the cause was just, St. Basil did not distinguish between wars with orthodox Christians and wars with pagans or heretics.

This brings us to the recent controversy over whether the Byzantines had a concept of holy war. Here I find myself in the odd position of accepting most of the arguments of one side but agreeing with the conclusion of the other. Angeliki Laiou and Nicholas Oikonomides have argued that the Byzantines had no concept of holy war, because true holy wars required conditions that did not apply at Byzantium: that the war be approved by a religious authority, be fought avowedly against non-Christians or heretics, enjoy popular support, and be an offensive war.³ Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki and Tia Kolbaba have disagreed, arguing that these conditions were either met at Byzantium or not necessary for a holy war.⁴ They rightly point out that the

¹ Basil of Caesarea, *The Letters*, ed. & trans. Roy J. DeFerrari, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926–34), Letter 188, canon 13. The translation given here is mine.

² Basil, *Letters*, Letter 188, canons 2 and 7.

³ Angeliki Laiou, "On Just War in Byzantium," in *To Hellenikon: Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis, Jr.*, ed. John Langdon et al. (New Rochelle, NY: Artistide D. Caratzas, 1993), 1: 153–77; Nicholas Oikonomides, "The Concept of 'Holy War' and Two Byzantine Ivories," in *Peace and War in Byzantium: Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis, S.J.*, ed. Timothy Miller and John Nesbitt (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 62–86.

⁴ Athena Kolia-Dermitzake, *Ho vyzantinos "hieros polemos": he ennoia kai he provole tou threskeutikou polemou sto Vyzantio* (Byzantine "Holy War": the Idea and Propagation of Religious War in Byzantium) (Athens: Historikes Ekdoseis St. D. Vasilopoulos, 1991), with English summary on 394–408, and Tia Kolbaba, "Fighting for Christianity: Holy War in the Byzantine Empire," *Byzantion* 68 (1998): 194–221.

Byzantine emperor, who declared wars, could himself act as a religious authority; he surely did when he summoned church councils. They are also right that when Byzantium fought a non-Christian enemy Byzantine propaganda emphasized the fact, and such a war usually enjoyed some popular support.⁵ They also seem to me right to argue that Byzantine wars should not be disqualified as holy wars simply because they were defensive. The Crusades themselves could be considered defensive wars, because they helped embattled Christians and reclaimed lands that had once been Christian. Muslims also thought defensive warfare could qualify as *jihad*, if it was fought against non-Muslims.

Nonetheless, I would agree with Laiou and Oikonomides that Byzantium had no concept of holy war, even in the restricted sense argued by Kolia-Dermitzaki and Kolbaba, which is already more limited than the Western Crusade or Muslim *jihad*. Kolbaba puts her case in very moderate terms: "The emperor's wars are God's work because all of his deeds are God's work."⁶ On such grounds the Byzantines called their emperor's palace the Sacred Palace, his bedroom the Sacred Bedchamber, and so on. Yet the very fact that the Byzantines used the words "sacred" and "holy" so freely for everything associated with their emperor makes it all the more significant that, to my knowledge, no one has found a Byzantine text that explicitly calls any war a holy war.

I strongly suspect that the phrase "holy war" would have struck most Byzantines as tasteless, if not blasphemous. To them war was not something morally neutral, like a palace or a bedroom, which association with the emperor could sanctify. The Byzantines were no more willing to call what the emperor fought a "holy war" than to call what the emperor did with the empress in the Sacred Bedchamber "sacred sex." Because the emperor needed to defend the empire against its enemies, just as he needed to have an heir to the throne, war (like sex) was a practical necessity for him in this fallen world. Under the right conditions it was not exactly evil; but it was never

⁵ Kolia-Dermitzake, *Ho vyzantinos "hieros polemos,"* 146–316, discusses many Byzantine references to the righteousness of wars against the Persians, Arabs, and Turks. See also Michael Whitby, "*Deus Nobiscum*: Christianity and Warfare in Late Antiquity," in *Modus Operandi: Essays in Honor of Geoffrey Rickman*, ed. Michael Austin et al. (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 1998), 191–208.

⁶ Kolbaba, "Fighting for Christianity," 203.

holy. By its very nature, war was, in St. Basil's words, "not clean."

My conclusion is that the Byzantines, unlike Muslims or Western Crusaders, had no special category of war against people who did not share their faith. Among the Byzantines no wars were holy, not even those against Muslims, pagans, or heretics. In fact, if one were to look simply at the way the Byzantines acted, one would be tempted to conclude that the Byzantines were most reluctant to fight non-Christians, less reluctant to fight Christian foreigners, and least reluctant to fight their fellow Byzantine Christians.

For this reason Kolbaba's phrase "fighting for Christianity" seems wrong for the Byzantines, even though they carried crosses into battle and used the war cry "The Cross has conquered!" If the Byzantines preferred to fight for Christianity, why, for example, did the emperor Basil II prefer fighting the orthodox Christian Bulgarians to fighting Muslims—even when the Fatimid Caliph ordered all the churches in his Caliphate destroyed, including the Church of the Holy Sepulcher?⁷ Another description that seems not to fit Byzantine practice is John Haldon's phrase "fighting for peace."⁸ Though almost every war is fought for peace on certain terms, you can usually achieve peace without fighting if you make enough concessions. If the Byzantines fought mainly for peace, why did they so often tolerate raiding by Huns, Arabs, Turks, and others, even when fighting those raiders might well have brought peace? And if the Byzantines were so enamored of peace, why did they so often raise armed revolts against their own emperors, often calling in Arabs, Turks, and others to help?⁹

Laiou is surely right that the Byzantines had a concept of "just war"—a war that, in St. Basil's rather vague words, "defend[ed] the cause of righteousness and piety." Drawing primarily on the history of Anna Comnena, but considering other relevant texts, Laiou has suggested five grounds that Byzantines cited for just wars: "self-

⁷ See Treadgold, *History*, 525–281.

⁸ John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 13–33. The idea of "fighting for peace" (itself a Stalinist slogan) is one of several of Haldon's interpretations of Byzantium that I find anachronistic and mistaken. Yet Haldon correctly concludes on p. 280 that Byzantium "was a society [...] in which warfare was universally seen as evil, even by the soldiers most actively involved."

⁹ See the Appendix to this paper, which lists the Byzantine civil wars and notes which were fought with foreign support.

defense,” “recovery of territory,” “breach of agreement,” “averting a greater evil,” and “pursuit of peace.”¹⁰ As Laiou essentially admits, in practice most wars fought for the last three of these reasons turn out to be defensive wars. So we are left with two main types of war that the Byzantines considered just: defensive wars, and wars to reconquer territory that had previously been Byzantine. Though defending oneself in a civil war would qualify as defensive warfare, starting a civil war would be very hard to justify, except perhaps to “avert a greater evil,” an elastic but not very satisfactory pretext.

II

In the rest of this article I will discuss the sorts of wars that the Byzantines did fight, taking the foreign wars first and the civil wars second. The foreign wars can be subdivided into offensive wars, defensive wars, and (an intermediate type) wars of reconquest. I shall use the most inclusive dates for the Byzantine period, from 285 to 1461. Even though these dates may be a bit too inclusive for this purpose, they reveal something interesting about the offensive wars. By my count there were only two of them, both at the very beginning of the period, before many scholars would say the Roman Empire was Byzantine at all.

Both of these wars were fought against the Persian Empire. The first was a successful invasion of Persia in 298, the second a failed invasion in 363. Since both wars followed serious Persian attacks, they could be considered retaliatory or pre-emptive. Each had limited objectives, but took advantage of the fact that the Persian capital of Ctesiphon was not far from the border; after sacking Ctesiphon in the first war and failing to sack it in the second, neither expedition advanced farther.¹¹ Of particular interest is that both wars were started by pagan emperors: Diocletian and Julian. Consequently these wars seem not to reflect the developed attitudes of Byzantine Christians, who never fought such wars later.¹²

¹⁰ Laiou, “On Just War in Byzantium.”

¹¹ Treadgold, *History*, 22–23 and 60–62.

¹² Admittedly, the first Christian emperor, Constantine I, seems to have been preparing a similar invasion of Persia when he died in 337; see Treadgold, *History*, 48, and Timothy Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 259. Yet Constantine had been raised a pagan and was baptized only

No one would dispute that most Byzantine warfare throughout the empire's twelve centuries of existence was defensive. Though this fighting included forays into enemy territory, in the form of retaliatory raids or hot pursuit, on the whole it was restrained and reactive. From the third through the sixth century, Goths, Sarmatians, Huns, Persians, and others raided Byzantine territory again and again. Often the Byzantines did nothing. Sometimes they paid the raiders not to raid; when the raiders raided anyway, usually the Byzantines either did nothing or paid them more.¹³ The Byzantines did fight one great battle against the Goths, well inside Byzantine territory at Adrianople in 376, and lost disastrously. After that Byzantium resolved its Gothic problems not by major battles but by encouraging the Goths to go West, despite the unfortunate results for the Western Roman Empire.

Though the Byzantines often had to fight the Persians, they deterred them with a bare minimum of retaliation and bought them off with especially large payments.¹⁴ Byzantium never seriously tried to recover the border territory it lost to Persia after Julian's failed invasion. The empire's next major foray into Persia was in 591, when the emperor Maurice, over the opposition of his advisers, helped restore the legitimate Persian king to his throne after a revolt.¹⁵ Byzantium was rewarded with the return of some borderlands, eleven years of peace—and then a devastating Persian invasion of Byzantine Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. The empire briefly regained these from the Persians, only to lose them again to the Muslims after a brief resistance.¹⁶

During most of the seventh and eighth centuries, the Byzantines simply accepted their loss of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt to the Muslims and of most of the Balkan Peninsula to the Avars and Slavs,

on his deathbed; and since he ruled both East and West and had begun his rule in the West, his thinking may also be seen as part of the developing attitude toward warfare of the Western Church, which differed from the Eastern Church. Although in 572 Justin II provoked a war with Persia, he had no coherent plan for invading it; see Treadgold, *History*, 222–23.

¹³ The classic case is the Byzantines' treatment of the Huns in the early fifth century; see Treadgold, *History*, 88–97.

¹⁴ See now Geoffrey Greatrex and Samuel Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, Part II, AD 363–630: A Narrative Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁵ Treadgold, *History*, 230–32.

¹⁶ I include in this brief resistance an abortive attempt to retake Alexandria in 645, just three years after it had been lost to the Muslims; Treadgold, *History*, 311–12.

who had overrun it during the Persian war. The empire made a feeble attempt to keep the Bulgars from taking a few of its remaining Balkan outposts, then accepted that loss as well. Byzantine efforts against both Bulgars and Muslims were essentially defensive until the tenth century, when the Byzantines made some reconquests to which we shall return.

In the mid eleventh century Byzantium went back on the defensive against the Normans and Seljuk Turks—if one can call “defensive” a total failure to defend either southern Italy or Anatolia, which fell to the invaders. After retaking some of Anatolia from the Turks, the Byzantines defended what they had for about 70 years. Then, plagued by civil wars, they lost much of the Balkans to the Serbs and Bulgarians, and still more, including Constantinople, to the westerners during the Fourth Crusade. After one last burst of reconquest, the Byzantines, with the help of more civil wars, slowly lost everything to the Ottoman Turks.

My point is not that the Byzantines defended themselves badly, because for the most part they defended themselves very well. After all, the empire lasted longer than all its enemies. It outlived the Persian Empire, two Muslim caliphates, two Bulgarian empires, and the Seljuk Turks; even the Ottoman Turks, who brought Byzantium down, founded an empire that was to have a much shorter life. The Byzantines were probably wise to avoid major pitched battles, especially because they lost most of the few they did fight, like the battle of Adrianople against the Goths, the battle of the Yarmuk during the initial Muslim expansion, and the battles of Manzikert and Myrioccephalum against the Seljuk Turks.¹⁷

On the other hand, the Byzantines evidently missed some opportunities to exploit the vulnerability of their enemies. For example, Byzantium would have had every chance of success if it had tried earlier than it did to recover Greece from the weak and divided tribes of the Slavs; and having Greece earlier would have strengthened the empire and made it more defensible. Around 1100 a greater effort by the Byzantines would probably have recovered not just a corner of Anatolia from the Seljuk Turks but all of it; and having all of Anatolia would have made Byzantium stronger and more

¹⁷ Treadgold, *History*, 67–68 (Adrianople), 303 (Yarmuk), 603–4 (Manzikert), and 649 (Myrioccephalum).

defensible. For whatever reasons, however, the Byzantines ignored such chances to regain lost territory.

III

Yet the Byzantines did fight some wars of reconquest. The most spectacular look almost like highly successful offensive wars: Justinian's conquests of northwestern Africa from the Vandals, Italy and the western Balkans from the Ostrogoths, and southeastern Spain from the Visigoths. To be sure, these lands had once been part of the empire—but of the Western Roman Empire, not the Eastern Roman Empire that we conventionally call Byzantium. Moreover, some of these provinces had been lost more than a century before Justinian invaded them. So were these gains really reconquests, or just conquests made on plausible pretexts?

Justinian, who ordered them, was a native speaker of Latin, born in Illyricum (roughly the former Yugoslavia). His home town lay only some hundred miles east of the former administrative boundary between the eastern and western empires, which divided Illyricum.¹⁸ The last Western Roman emperor, Nepos, ruled in western Illyricum until just two years before Justinian was born, and when Justin I, Justinian's uncle and adopted father, was about thirty.¹⁹ Justin's and Justinian's Illyrian homeland had once been part of the Western Roman Empire and in their time remained under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Pope at Rome, not of the Patriarch of Constantinople. When Justinian first sent troops to reconquer western Illyricum, it had been Roman within living memory, fifty-five years before.²⁰ Justinian himself surely knew that many people in the West spoke his language, shared his faith, and were none too happy to be ruled by German barbarians, who were also Arian heretics.

Though Justinian's great general Belisarius was also a Latin-speaking native of Illyricum, to most Byzantines of the time the former Western Roman Empire must have seemed a faraway land speaking a foreign

¹⁸ See A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale and J. Morris *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971–92), 2: Iustinianus 7.

¹⁹ Jones, Martindale and Morris, *Prosopography*, 2: Iustinus 4.

²⁰ I count from the death of Nepos in Illyricum in 480 to the invasion of Illyricum by Mundus in 535.

tongue.²¹ We know that all Justinian's advisers opposed his first foray into the former Western Roman Empire, his expedition to Africa. They almost persuaded him to call it off, until an eastern bishop told him it was his duty to free the Africans from "tyrants," and some Africans actually raised a pro-Byzantine revolt.²² Justinian's troops enjoyed considerable support from the Africans, Illyrians, Italians, and Spaniards, though in the Middle Ages active popular support for any invading army was extremely rare, and for a foreign army almost unknown.²³ But many Westerners, like Justinian himself, seem to have regarded his campaigns not as foreign invasions, but as reconquests by their legitimate ruler.²⁴

The next Byzantine reconquest was Emperor Heraclius' recovery of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, which the Persians had taken and held for ten to twenty-three years. This land, most of it lost during Heraclius' own reign, was plainly reconquered in a defensive war, not conquered in an aggressive one. What is striking about the war, and belies any attempt to regard it as a sort of proto-crusade, is that Heraclius was almost certainly ready to let the Persians keep their conquests. He begged abjectly for peace at a time when the Persians had already taken Syria and Palestine, including Jerusalem, and were in the process of taking Egypt.²⁵ But the Persian king imprisoned

²¹ Jones, Martindale and Morris, *Prosopography*, 3: Belisarius 1.

²² Procopius of Caesarea. *Opera Omnia*, ed. J. Haury and G. Wirth (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1962–64), *Wars* III.10.1–23.

²³ See Procopius, *Wars* III.10.22–24, 17.6, 20.1 and 3 (Africa); V.7.10 and 31 (Illyricum); and V.5.12 and 18, 8.1–2 and 26–28, 14.4–5, 15.3, 16.3–4, 25.11–12, VI.7.35–38 and 2: 10.5–6 (Italy). On the Romans in Cordova who were in rebellion against the Visigoths both before and during Justinian's invasion, see E. A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 16–17, 27–28, and 321–29, though he seems much too eager to minimize the possibility of cooperation between the rebels at Cordova and the Byzantines or the Byzantines' ally, Athanagild. Apart from the fact that all the enemies of king Agila had every incentive to cooperate, the Romans in Spain would have been at least as likely to think themselves natural Byzantine allies as the far better-documented Romans of Vandal Africa and Ostrogothic Italy and Illyricum. The Visigoths were certainly less popular than the Ostrogoths, who never suffered a spontaneous rebellion like that at Cordova.

²⁴ Cf. Procopius, *Wars* V.5.8–9, in which Justinian says he is fighting the Goths because they have taken "our" Italy and refused to return it.

²⁵ *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*. (Bonn: E. Weber, 1832), 1: 705–9 (dated to indiction 4 = Sept. 1, 615–Aug. 31, 616); Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. Carl de Boor (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1883–85), 1: 301 (dating the peace overture after the loss of Egypt, which began in 616, and to A.M. 6109 = 616/17, which since Theophanes' years of the world are a year

Heraclius' ambassadors and let them die, invaded Anatolia, and besieged Constantinople with the help of the Avars.

Once Heraclius had reluctantly concluded that the Persian objective was to destroy his empire, he invaded Persia in a desperate attempt to save it. He was so successful that the Persians overthrew their king in 628 and sued for peace. Though the new Persian king agreed to give up Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, his agreement was meaningless, because all three provinces were then in the hands of a rebel Persian general. Heraclius got them back later without fighting, after agreeing to back the general's rebellion against the next Persian king. Whether Heraclius would have fought to regain Syria, Palestine, and Egypt is very doubtful. He never tried to recover any of the Balkans from the Avars, though after his victory over Persia the Avar khanate was disintegrating. Heraclius' war against the Persians was very much a defensive war.²⁶

During the next three centuries Byzantium reconquered what little land it did either without serious fighting or as the incidental result of defensive wars. The empire regained Greece by a process more of peaceful resettlement than reconquest because the few Slavs there barely resisted.²⁷ The empire retook the tiny border state of the Paulician heretics only to stop their relentless raids after they refused an offer of peace.²⁸ The Byzantines' first gains in Armenia were voluntarily ceded to the empire by Armenian princes seeking Byzantine protection.²⁹

Then, after 934, came a century of increasingly dramatic expansion in the Balkans, northern Syria, Armenia, and southern Italy that nearly doubled Byzantine territory. As before, these were technically reconquests, though all had been lost long ago, usually more

late for this period should be corrected to 615/16); and Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Short History*, ed. and trans. Cyril Mango, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990), 6–7 (also dating the peace overture after the loss of Egypt). Given the references to Egypt, a date in summer 616 seems most likely for the embassy. James Howard-Johnston, "Heraclius' Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire, 622–630," *War in History* 6 (1999): 3 and n. 8, dates it to "the winter of 615/16," for reasons unclear to me.

²⁶ On the whole war, see Treadgold, *History*, 287–301, and now Walter E. Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 58–228 (though Kaegi's treatment of the Balkans is inadequate).

²⁷ See Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780–842* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 135–38 and 159–64.

²⁸ Treadgold, *History*, 457–58.

²⁹ Treadgold, *History*, 466–67.

than two hundred years before. Most, however, are best described as defensive or retaliatory efforts that got somewhat out of hand. The Byzantines were mainly interested in stopping Muslim raiding when they conquered the neighboring Muslim emirates of Melitene, Crete, and Tarsus, all of which had served as bases for generations of Muslim raiders.³⁰ The Byzantines recovered a few other borderlands when some Muslims deserted to the empire and more Armenian princes ceded their lands to it.³¹ Byzantium also took Edessa and Antioch—partly because both cities had large Christian populations and illustrious Christian histories, but also because both had strong city walls that helped defend the new frontier.³² Then still more Armenian and Georgian rulers ceded their lands to the empire, either for protection or as reparations for backing the losing side in Byzantine civil wars.³³

The Byzantines originally had no plan to conquer Bulgaria, though it had often attacked the empire and lay entirely in former Byzantine territory. The emperor, John I Tzimiskes, was only defending his empire when he conquered much of Bulgaria from the Russians, who had seized it and were threatening to attack Constantinople from it.³⁴ The Bulgarians then exploited a Byzantine civil war to reclaim their lost land; and they would probably have gotten away with it, had they not provoked the empire by invading Greece. This began a long and bitter war with Basil II, who nonetheless offered several times to make peace if Bulgaria would give up its recent conquests and become a Byzantine client state. Three Bulgarian rulers died resisting Basil's attacks. Finally the widow of the third ruler, apparently not realizing that Basil only demanded a protectorate over Bulgaria, surrendered outright in order to stop the war.³⁵ Only then did Basil annex Bulgaria, almost against his will.

Some historians have seen Basil's predecessors, Nicephorus II Phocas and John I, as proto-crusaders who dreamed of extending

³⁰ Treadgold, *History*, 481–83 (Melitene), 494–95 and 497 (Crete), and 501 (Tarsus).

³¹ Treadgold, *History*, 483 (desertion of the Banu Habib) and 502 (Taron and other places in Armenia).

³² Treadgold, *History*, 504–505.

³³ Treadgold, *History*, 520 and 523 (Upper Tao), and 529–30, 589, and 592 (Ani and Vaspurakan).

³⁴ Treadgold, *History*, 507–11.

³⁵ Treadgold, *History*, 514–28 *passim*, mentioning Basil's willingness to make peace on 522, 525, and 526–27.

their Syrian conquests south to retake Jerusalem. The main evidence is a report that Nicephorus asked the Byzantine Church to honor soldiers who fell in battle as “martyrs”; the Church rebuffed him, citing St. Basil’s suggestion of three years’ penance for killing in battle.³⁶ This report is clearly hostile to Nicephorus, and may well be distorted. Nicephorus can scarcely have expected that a Church that took such a negative view of warfare would give ordinary soldiers the exalted status of martyrs—that is, of saints. Quite possibly Nicephorus asked for something more modest, perhaps only remission of the sins of soldiers who died in battle, as if they had done the penance that they would then have had no time to do.³⁷ In any case, whatever Nicephorus wanted, the Church refused it.

Whether Nicephorus II or John I actually hoped to conquer and keep Jerusalem, just to visit it under arms and then leave it, or not to go there at all, is hard to prove.³⁸ We do know that between them Nicephorus and John sacked several Syrian cities that they made no attempt to keep, including Aleppo, which John made a client state when he could almost certainly have annexed it.³⁹ John’s actual conquests in Syria corresponded closely to the parts that still had a substantial Christian population, and they may well have been all that he wanted to keep. Any further conquests would have brought with them large numbers of Muslims, whom Byzantine emperors

³⁶ John Scylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. J. Thurn, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), 274–75.

³⁷ While this sort of remission of sins was granted to soldiers if they died in a battle around 1208 by the Patriarch Michael IV Autourianus, the value of this parallel is dubious, because so soon after the Fourth Crusade in 1204 Michael was so patently influenced by the remission of sins offered to Western Crusaders, especially because many of the soldiers he was addressing were Western mercenaries; see Nicolas Oikonomides, “Cinq actes inédits du patriarche Michel Autôreianos,” *Revue des Études Byzantines* 25 (1967): 113–45, esp. 117–19 and 131–45. Nicephorus II’s request is discussed at length (without my skepticism) by Hans-Georg Beck, *Nomos, Kanon und Staatsraison in Byzanz* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie des Wissenschaften, 1981).

³⁸ See Paul E. Walker, “The ‘Crusade’ of John Tzimiskes in the Light of New Arabic Evidence,” *Byzantion* 47 (1977): 301–27, who concludes (on page 327) that “although [John’s] war in 975 was in part religiously motivated, faith was more a public relations’ excuse than the real cause which propelled the soldiers to fight. It was not the campaign itself which ‘breathed the veritable crusading spirit,’ but the emperor’s after-the-fact letter written to put the most diplomatically valuable face on his recent achievements.”

³⁹ Treadgold, *History*, 496 (Aleppo), 504 (Hama and Homs), and 511–12 (Nisibis, Apamea, and Baalbek, and Beirut), with 507 (protectorate over Aleppo).

were extremely reluctant to rule.⁴⁰ When Nicephorus II reconquered Crete and Cilicia, most of their relatively few Muslim inhabitants were either converted to Christianity or expelled.⁴¹ This was probably the main reason the Byzantines seemed to like to fight Christians more than they liked to fight Muslims. The emperors preferred to conquer Christian lands because Christians were more convenient to rule.

Around 1100, Emperor Alexius I's recovery of northwestern Anatolia in the wake of the First Crusade was obviously a reconquest, since the Turks had held the land he retook for no more than seventeen years. Yet why did Alexius stop with the coastal plains of Anatolia, when he could surely have retaken more from the weakened Turks? My own answer is that retaking inland Anatolia would have meant restoring the Anatolian estates of many great landholders who Alexius feared might try to overthrow him.⁴² As we shall see in discussing civil wars, such a fear was by no means unjustified. In any event, the Byzantines regained little more until their empire fell to the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The last major Byzantine reconquest came when the Byzantine successor state at Nicaea retook much of what the Crusaders had taken, culminating in the almost bloodless recapture of Constantinople in 1261 under Michael VIII Palaeologus.⁴³

⁴⁰ Here I strongly disagree with Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 41: "The resources necessary to extend permanently beyond north Syria were simply not available, however much the propaganda of the military magnate elite of Asia Minor, as personified by John [I] Tzimiskes and Nikeph[o]ros Phocas [Nicephorus II], hoped for a process of continued expansion leading to the recovery of the lost provinces of the east and the incorporation of all the Christian populations still under Islam into a revived Orthodox empire." In fact, the resources were abundantly available, as appears from the immense surplus left in the treasury by Basil II in 1025 (even after remitting two years' worth of land and hearth taxes) and by his army of some 250,000 men, which far exceeded the empire's defensive needs; see Treadgold, *History*, 537, 548–49, and 569–79.

⁴¹ Treadgold, *History*, 495 (Crete), 501 (Cilicia), and 535–39 (rationale for the conquests).

⁴² Treadgold, *History*, 628–29 and 671–72.

⁴³ While no one doubts that this was a reconquest, note that Constantinople had then been in foreign hands for fifty-seven years, two years longer than western Illyricum had been when Justinian recovered it. I do not count as reconquests the restored Byzantine Empire's recovery of land from the other successor states in Epirus and Thessaly, because, both sides being "Byzantine," these are best considered as civil wars.

IV

More confirmation of the defensive inclinations of the Byzantines appears in the organization of their army. From the fourth to the sixth century, almost two-thirds of the soldiers were essentially defensive frontier troops (called *limitanei*).⁴⁴ During a financial crisis in the mid-sixth century, the government ended the modest pay (though not the other perquisites) of these troops; but this was perhaps a mistake, because during the next sixty years the empire lost not only its frontier troops but nearly all its frontiers.⁴⁵ In the seventh century almost the whole empire became a frontier because all of it was open to enemy incursions. What had formerly been a field army became the essentially defensive “themes” (an Anglicization of the Greek word *themata*). The themes made up more than three-quarters of the army and were stationed all over the empire in districts also called themes, which their main purpose was to defend.⁴⁶

By the early eleventh century, when the empire became more secure, the government began to consider the themes unnecessary and let them decline and finally disband by debasing the coinage used to pay them. This too was probably a mistake, since it was followed by the temporary loss of more than half the empire and the permanent insecurity of the remainder. During the rest of Byzantine history, the government defended itself with an army composed largely of foreign mercenaries. In all three of these stages of Byzantine military organization the largest part of the army was devoted to defense—first the frontier troops, then the themes, and finally the mercenaries.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ In my *Byzantium and Its Army, 284–1081* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 44–59, I estimate the frontier troops at about 195,500, the field troops at about 104,000, and the Scholae (guardsmen) at 3,500. This makes a total for the whole Eastern army of some 303,000 men (excluding the navy).

⁴⁵ The government continued to issue the frontier troops rations, arms, uniforms, horses, and fodder even after eliminating their regular pay; see Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army*, 17, 59–60, 150–51, and 204.

⁴⁶ See Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army*, 66, Table 2, for figures (mostly recorded rather than estimated) putting the themes at 62,000 of the 80,000 men in the army of 773 and at 96,000 of the 124,000 men in the army of 899.

⁴⁷ Although I consider John Haldon’s theory of the origin of the themes impossible on economic grounds (cf. my *Byzantium and Its Army*, 179–85), I generally agree with his summation in *Warfare, State and Society*, 38: “In the light of this strategic situation, defence was the primary concern of Byzantine rulers and generals. Byzantine military dispositions were organized and administered upon a consistent and logis-

It remains interesting that the greatest reconquests occurred during the transitions between these stages of military organization. Justinian, the emperor who cut the pay of the frontier troops, reconquered much of the Western Roman Empire; Heraclius, probably the last important emperor before the creation of the themes, reconquered Syria and Egypt from Persia. Later, just when the system of themes was beginning to break down, Nicephorus II, John I, and Basil II reconquered northern Syria, Armenia, and Bulgaria.⁴⁸

The breakdown of the defensive systems of the *limitanei* and the themes increased the relative importance of the main mobile forces of the army, which did most of the work of the reconquests. In Justinian's time the mobile forces were the field armies, which Justinian increased by about sixty percent.⁴⁹ After the field armies were turned into the themes, later emperors developed new mobile forces, chiefly the so-called *tagmata*. Nicephorus II, John I, and Basil II together apparently increased their field forces by about fifty percent.⁵⁰ Both times the newly strengthened field forces accomplished reconquests that earlier and later emperors never attempted, probably could not have achieved, and may not even have wanted.

V

Turning now to the hardest question of all: why did the otherwise not very bellicose Byzantines fight so many civil wars? I cannot claim to have a fully satisfactory answer, which will only be found with further research. Thus far, no one has made a study of Byzantine

tically well-organized basis, and their main purpose was to secure the survival of the empire by deploying the limited resources available to the best effect." See also *ibid.*, 60 ("The late Roman system [...] was orientated entirely towards defence") and 62 ("The new strategic system [...] was even more clearly defensively orientated.").

⁴⁸ For the suggestion that Nicephorus II was the first emperor to reduce the wages of the less useful themes by paying them in coins of lighter weight (called *tetartera*) see Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army*, 139–40.

⁴⁹ Justinian added the field armies of Armenia, Italy, Africa, and Spain, which the estimates in Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army*, 59–63, put at a total of 55,000 men, with the five previously existing field armies totaling 95,000 men at the beginning of Justinian's reign.

⁵⁰ Before Nicephorus II these field forces were the *tagmata*, which totaled 28,000, and to these Nicephorus probably added 4,000 new Scholae and Excubitors, John the 4,000-man Immortals, and Basil the 6,000-man Varangians, for a total of 14,000; cf. Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army*, 67 (Table 2) and 78–79.

civil wars as such in any period.⁵¹ Two books have partly concerned themselves with civil wars: Walter Kaegi's *Byzantine Military Unrest, 471–843* and Jean-Claude Cheynet's *Power and Conflicts at Byzantium, 963–1210*. Yet both studies cover not just civil wars but protests and conspiracies that never actually led to fighting. Moreover, neither book directly discusses why the Byzantines, usually so reluctant to engage in aggressive warfare against others, were much less reluctant to engage in aggressive warfare among themselves.⁵²

I suggest as a working definition of a Byzantine civil war “an armed conflict in which a significant number of Byzantine soldiers fought on both sides with a significant number of casualties.” This definition excludes plots in which only the emperor and a few of his retainers were killed, which are better described as coups than as civil wars. The definition includes, along with wars over who would be emperor, a few wars over who would dominate a figurehead emperor. I would also include wars in the fourth and fifth centuries between the Eastern and Western Roman empires and wars after the Fourth Crusade between Byzantine successor states. These successor states—primarily the empires of Nicaea, Thessalonica, and Trebizond—showed a preference for fighting each other instead of their Crusader enemies that seems related to the earlier Byzantines’ preference for civil wars instead of foreign wars.

Using this definition, I have compiled a preliminary list of Byzantine civil wars. Many of these ended in a single battle, though that battle could be very bloody. Most of the wars were over within a year, and some of the longer ones never spread beyond limited regions. Since a few cases are debatable for one reason or another, other

⁵¹ The *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) has an article on the Civil War of 1341–47, but not on civil war as such.

⁵² Walter Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest, 471–843: An Interpretation* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1981); Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1990). While neither of these books is a study of civil war as such, their approaches are very different. Kaegi's book seems to me to treat dissimilar phenomena with much too little regard for their differences or their broader social and economic context, and as a result comes to only the most obvious conclusions (e.g., that troops were more likely to rebel if they had not been paid). Cheynet's book defines its subject coherently, considers social and economic factors, and consequently considerably illuminates the background of this period of civil wars; though I would argue that the period of civil wars extended past 1210, Cheynet's terminal date is still a reasonable one, since the Fourth Crusade changed the situation in important ways.

scholars may arrive at a number slightly higher or lower than mine. I have counted 120 civil wars, about one every ten years. This seems rather a lot, especially because the rebels faced long odds. Just 23 of these wars, fewer than one in five, actually succeeded in deposing or dominating an emperor.⁵³

The distribution of the civil wars over time is uneven. Before Justinian, civil wars were somewhat less common than average, about one every fourteen years. Because the three earliest civil wars were fought among pagans, they would not have concerned St. Basil, whose strictures were meant for Christians. Most of the other civil wars were related to a religious cause that St. Basil might have considered more or less righteous and pious. In four wars Christians fought pagans; in seven more, orthodox Christians fought those they considered heretics (and the heretics would of course have seen it the other way around). That leaves only three civil wars without an obvious religious motive.⁵⁴ Even in those, no doubt the government would have claimed that it was defending itself against an unjustified revolt, while the rebels would have claimed that their revolt was justified; but that is true of almost every civil war, and would probably not have impressed St. Basil.

Under Justinian's dynasty there were just three civil wars, one every twenty-eight years, and all three began as army mutinies. My explanation is that just before Justinian the field soldiers' pay had been raised by two-thirds, a sum the government could barely afford; as a result, the soldiers were usually too contented to rebel, but they were ready to mutiny when the government either failed to pay them or, worse still, tried to reduce their compensation permanently. Several mutinies, including two that turned into civil wars, ended when the mutinous troops were paid. The third mutiny, in 602, murdered Emperor Maurice when he made his third attempt to economize on

⁵³ See the Appendix, where rebels who succeeded in deposing or dominating an emperor by civil wars are marked with an asterisk. While a few of these rebels may have intended no more than to rule in limited regions, almost all of them declared themselves emperor; only two, Alexius I of Trebizond and Leo Gabalas of Rhodes, actually managed to establish a viable regional state by means of civil war, both by taking advantage of the unique circumstances of 1204 (Gabalas was eventually subdued by John III from Nicaea). Note that of the 23 successful civil wars, three deposed an emperor who later regained his throne (Justinian II once and John V twice).

⁵⁴ Here and later, see the relevant annotations to the entries in the Appendix.

the army.⁵⁵ Though these mutinies may be explicable, St. Basil would presumably not have found them justifiable.

In the two and a half centuries after Maurice's murder there were twenty-two civil wars, about one every eleven years, near the Byzantine average. Though a few of these had some vague connection with a religious cause, most recent scholars (myself included) tend to regard these causes as pretexts, if not fictions. Probably much more important was the fact that during most of this time military pay was very low, about a third of what it had been in the sixth century, and scarcely a living wage. I believe (though the point remains controversial) that the soldiers chiefly depended on land grants in the themes. Because these land grants made the soldiers financially independent of the central government, they were often ready to join revolts led by ambitious commanders of their themes. Most civil wars of the period were of this type.⁵⁶ St. Basil would surely have disapproved.

The next two centuries saw many fewer civil wars: only seven, roughly one every twenty-nine years, much as in the age of Justinian. Like the age of Justinian, this seems to have been a time of relatively high military pay. Around 840 the government almost doubled the soldiers' wages, and since they kept their land grants they must have been even better off than soldiers under Justinian. The themes promptly ceased to rebel.⁵⁷ But five of the seven civil wars involved ambitious generals who were great landholders, including the future emperor Nicephorus II and his nephew and grandnephew. Though St. Basil would have liked the decrease in civil wars, he would hardly have considered the ambitions of landed magnates a just cause for warfare.⁵⁸

Next, from 1039 to 1391, came the great age of Byzantine civil warfare: seventy-one civil wars, one every five years, about sixty percent of the total in just thirty percent of the Byzantine period. Most of these were simply naked grabs for power by aristocratic generals. Since the army was fairly small, divided, and discontented, soldiers could usually be found to back a revolt. Civil warfare got worse as foreign enemies closed in, the army became even unhappier, and

⁵⁵ See Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army*, 16, 19, 147–48, and 203–6.

⁵⁶ Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army*, 21–25, 141–44, and 171–86.

⁵⁷ Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army*, 119–44.

⁵⁸ On such aristocratic ambitions, see Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations*.

the civil wars in turn made it harder to resist the foreign enemies. In the twenty-three years before the Fourth Crusade took Constantinople in 1204, there were twenty-three civil wars, averaging one a year. St. Basil would have been horrified. Though in the last seventy years of Byzantine history the civil wars ceased, by then the Byzantines had hardly anything left to fight over, since the empire consisted of little more than Constantinople.

How should we explain this combination of reluctant and defensive foreign warfare and frequent, though erratic, civil war? I have two explanations to offer, one practical and the other theological. The practical explanation is that the advantages of seizing internal power were greater than those of conquering external enemies. Imperial power was nearly absolute and brought many benefits for the emperor and his supporters. If you were already emperor, you needed to defend the empire against enemy attack, because conspicuous enemy victories would make you look weak and vulnerable, encouraging some rebel to depose you. But an emperor had few incentives to attempt major reconquests. If you lost you were disgraced, and somebody might depose you; if you won, you gained relatively little in power, wealth, or even prestige.⁵⁹ None of the great Byzantine reconquerers was truly popular. Justinian was widely detested. Nicephorus II was murdered. John I was probably poisoned. Basil II faced a large-scale revolt three years after he finished conquering Bulgaria. Michael VIII's own son buried him in unconsecrated ground.⁶⁰ Civil wars might make you emperor; defensive wars defended your throne; but offensive wars offered few rewards from the emperor's point of view.⁶¹

My theological explanation for the Byzantine preference for civil war is rather similar to this. The Byzantines considered their emperors to be chosen by God, but only in the sense that whoever was

⁵⁹ This consideration incidentally helps to explain why relatively few Byzantine emperors, even those who had been military men before becoming emperor, led campaigns against foreigners after becoming emperor.

⁶⁰ See Treadgold, *History*, 181–82 and 218–19 (Justinian), 502–3 and 505 (Nicephorus II), 508 and 512 (John I), 530 (Basil II), and 737, 738–39, 741–42, 745, and 746 (Michael VIII).

⁶¹ Cf. Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 36: "Wars were costly, and for a state whose basic income derived from agricultural production, and which remained relatively stable as well as being vulnerable to both natural and man-made disasters, they were to be avoided if at all possible."

emperor was God's choice until God removed him.⁶² Becoming emperor, even by the most dastardly means, was taken as a sign of divine approval. When John I became emperor by murdering Nicephorus II, the patriarch forced John to do penance, which included giving the Church the property he had held as a private citizen and executing two of his co-conspirators; but then the patriarch promptly readmitted John to communion and crowned him. This was the same patriarch who had recently reminded Nicephorus II that St. Basil advised three years' penance for soldiers who killed in battle.⁶³ In the Byzantines' opinion, not even victory quite justified a foreign war, even if it was a war of reconquest. Yet victory did in effect justify a civil war, because it meant God had withdrawn his favor from the deposed emperor and chosen the rebel instead. By the same token, an emperor could scarcely avoid fighting defensive foreign wars, since being defeated by foreigners would imply God no longer entirely approved of him. The Byzantines were in fact most likely to rebel against their emperors when foreigners were defeating them—the very times when most modern observers would say the empire could least afford civil warfare.

Under no circumstances did the Byzantines think that war was good in itself. Most Byzantines preferred to fight only when it was necessary to defend their empire. Exceptionally, however, some emperors risked wars of reconquest when the empire was strong, and some adventurers risked civil wars when the empire was weak. Yet of these two types of war—wars of reconquest and civil wars—civil wars offered the Byzantines greater rewards, whether material or spiritual. This may well be the reason Byzantine civil wars were more common than Byzantine wars of reconquest.

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⁶² See, for example, Louis Bréhier, *Les institutions de l'empire byzantin* (Paris: A. Michel, 1949), 1–88.

⁶³ Treadgold, *History*, 505–6 (Polyeuctus' penance for John I) and 499 (the reminder to Nicephorus II).

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APPENDIX

LIST OF BYZANTINE CIVIL WARS

Note: Rebels who succeeded in deposing an established emperor by means of the civil war are marked with an asterisk (*). References are to Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Treadgold, *History*), A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale and J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (Jones et al., *Prosopography*), Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance*, and William Miller, *Trebizond: The Last Greek Empire*.

- 296–97 Domitian/Egyptians vs. Diocletian (Treadgold, *History*, 23 and Jones et al., *Prosopography* 1, Domitianus 6; pagan vs. pagan)
- 307 Galerius vs. Maxentius/Western Empire (Treadgold, *History*, 29; pagan vs. pagan)
- 313 Maximian vs. Licinius (Treadgold, *History*, 33; pagan vs. pagan)
- 316–17 Constantine I/Western Empire vs. Licinius (Treadgold, *History*, 34; Christian vs. pagan)
- 324 Constantine I*/Western Empire vs. Licinius (Treadgold, *History*, 36; Christian vs. pagan)
- 350–53 Constantius II vs. Magnentius/Western Empire (Treadgold, *History*, 55–56; Arian vs. orthodox)
- 365–66 Procopius vs. Valens (Treadgold, *History*, 64–65; pagan vs. Christian)
- 387–88 Theodosius I vs. Maximus/Western Empire (Treadgold, *History*, 74)
- 392–94 Theodosius I vs. Eugenius/Western Empire (Treadgold, *History*, 75; orthodox supported by Arian Germans vs. pro-pagan)
- 399–400 Gaïnas/Goths vs. various ministers to dominate Arcadius (Treadgold, *History*, 83–85; Arian German vs. orthodox)
- 423–25 Theodosius II vs. John/Western Empire (Treadgold, *History*, 91; Arian barbarians on both sides)
- 471 Aspar's Goths vs. Leo I (Treadgold, *History*, 155; Arians vs. orthodox)
- 475–76 Basiliscus vs. Zeno (Treadgold, *History*, 157; Monophysite vs. orthodox)
- 479 Marcian vs. Zeno (Treadgold, *History*, 159)
- 484–88 Leontius vs. Zeno (Treadgold, *History*, 161–64; orthodox vs. compromiser)
- 491–98 Longinus/Isaurians vs. Anastasius I (Treadgold, *History*, 165–66; orthodox vs. crypto-Monophysite)
- 513–18 Vitalian/Army of Thrace vs. Anastasius I (Treadgold, *History*, 171–72; orthodox vs. crypto-Monophysite)

Total for 285–518 (233 years): 17 civil wars (1 every 13.7 years)

- 536–37 Stotzas/Army of Africa supported by Arian barbarians vs. Justinian I (Treadgold, *History*, 188–89; cf. Jones et al., *Prosopography* 3, Stotzas; mutiny)
- 545–46 Stotzas and John/Army of Africa supported by Arian barbarians vs. Justinian I (Treadgold, *History*, 202; cf. Jones et al., *Prosopography* 3, Stotzas and Ioannes 35; mutiny)
- 602 Phocas* vs. Maurice (Treadgold, *History*, 235; mutiny)

Total for 518–602 (84 years): 3 civil wars (1 every 28 years)

- 602–5 Narses supported by Persians/Army of the East vs. Phocas (Treadgold, *History*, 236–38)
- 608–10 Heraclius*/Army of Africa vs. Phocas (Treadgold, *History*, 239–41)
- 644 Valentine vs. Constans II (Treadgold, *History*, 310)
- 648 Gregory/Army of Africa vs. Constans II (Treadgold, *History*, 312; orthodox vs. compromiser)
- 650–51 Olympius/Army of Italy vs. Constans II (Treadgold, *History*, 313; orthodox vs. compromiser)
- 668 Saborius/Armeniac Theme supported by Muslims vs. Constans II (Treadgold, *History*, 320)
- 668 Mizizius/Opsician Theme vs. Constans II and Constantine IV (Treadgold, *History*, 321–22, 323–24)
- 698 Tiberius III*/Carabisian Theme vs. Leontius (Treadgold, *History*, 338)
- 705 Justinian II* supported by pagan Bulgars vs. Tiberius III (Treadgold, *History*, 340)
- 711 Philippicus*/fleet (Carabisian Theme?) vs. Justinian II (Treadgold, *History*, 342; Monothelete vs. orthodox)
- 715 Theodosius III*/Opsician Theme vs. Anastasius II (Treadgold, *History*, 344–45)
- 716–17 Leo III*/Anatolic Theme vs. Theodosius III (Treadgold, *History*, 345)
- 718 Theme of Sicily vs. Leo III (Treadgold, *History*, 347–48)
- 719 Anastasius II supported by pagan Bulgars vs. Leo III (Treadgold, *History*, 349)
- 727 Cosmas/Theme of Hellas and Carabisian Theme vs. Leo III (Treadgold, *History*, 352; orthodox vs. iconoclast)
- 741–43 Artavasdus/Opsician Theme (appeal for Muslim support failed) vs. Constantine V (Treadgold, *History*, 356–58; compromiser vs. iconoclast)
- 781 Theme of Sicily vs. Constantine VI (Treadgold, *History*, 418)
- 792–93 Armeniac Theme vs. Constantine VI (Treadgold, *History*, 422)
- 803 Bardanes Turcus/Thracasian, Anatolic, Opsician, and Bucellarian themes vs. Nicephorus I (Treadgold, *History*, 425)
- 813 Leo V*/Anatolic Theme vs. Michael I Rhangabe (Treadgold, *History*, 431)
- 821–24 Thomas the Slav/Bucellarian, Paphlagonian, and Cibyrhaeot themes supported by Muslims vs. Michael II (Treadgold, *History*, 434–35; compromiser vs. moderate iconoclast)
- 838–39 Theophobus/Persian Turmae vs. Theophilus (Treadgold, *History*, 441–42)

Total for 602–839 (237 years): 22 civil wars (1 every 10.8 years)

- 932 Basil the Copper Hand vs. Romanus I (Treadgold, *History*, 481)
- 963 Nicephorus II* vs. Joseph Bringas to dominate Basil II (Treadgold, *History*, 498–99)
- 970 Bardas Phocas vs. John I (Treadgold, *History*, 508)
- 976–79 Bardas Sclerus supported by Muslims vs. Basil II (Treadgold, *History*, 513–16)
- 986–89 Bardas Sclerus and Bardas Phocas supported by Muslims vs. Basil II supported by Russians (Treadgold, *History*, 517–19)
- 1018–19 Meles/Theme of Longobardia vs. Basil II (Treadgold, *History*, 527 and 528)
- 1022 Nicephorus Phocas and Nicephorus Xiphias supported by Armenians and Georgians vs. Basil II (Treadgold, *History*, 530)

Total for 839–1039 (200 years): 7 civil wars (1 every 28.6 years)

- 1039–41 Peter Delyan and Alusian/Bulgarians vs. Michael IV (Treadgold, *History*, 588–89)
- 1042–43 George Maniaces vs. Constantine IX (Treadgold, *History*, 592)
- 1047 Leo Tornices vs. Constantine IX (Treadgold, *History*, 594)
- 1057 Isaac I* vs. Michael VI (Treadgold, *History*, 597–98)
- 1071–72 Romanus IV vs. Michael VII (Treadgold, *History*, 603–4)
- 1072–78 Philaretus Brachamius vs. Michael VII (Treadgold, *History*, 604–56, 607–10)
- 1072–73 Bulgarians vs. Michael VII (Treadgold, *History*, 604)
- 1073 John Ducas supported by Normans vs. Michael VII (Treadgold, *History*, 606)
- 1076–? Nestor supported by Pechenegs vs. Michael VII (Treadgold, *History*, 607)
- 1077–78 Nicephorus III* vs. Michael VII (Treadgold, *History*, 607)
- 1077–78 Nicephorus Bryennius vs. Michael VII and Nicephorus III (Treadgold, *History*, 607–10)
- 1078 Nicephorus Basilias vs. Nicephorus III with Turks (Treadgold, *History*, 610)
- 1079 Constantius Ducas vs. Nicephorus III (Treadgold, *History*, 610)
- 1080–81 Nicephorus Melissenus vs. Nicephorus III and Alexius I (Treadgold, *History*, 610–11, 613)
- 1081 Alexius I* vs. Nicephorus III (Treadgold, *History*, 610–11)
- 1110 Michael of Amastris vs. Alexius I (Treadgold, *History*, 627)
- 1126–41 Constantine Gabras supported by Turks vs. John II (Treadgold, *History*, 630–31, 634)
- 1126–30 Cassianus supported by Turks vs. John II (Treadgold, *History*, 630–31)
- 1181–82 Andronicus I* vs. Alexius II (Treadgold, *History*, 651–52)
- 1183–84 Theodore Angelus and Isaac II vs. Andronicus I (Treadgold, *History*, 653–54)
- c. 1185–91 Isaac Comnenus vs. Andronicus I and Isaac II (Treadgold, *History*, 654, 657, and 658)
- 1187 Alexius Branas vs. Isaac II (Treadgold, *History*, 657)
- 1188–92 Theodore Mangaphas supported by Turks vs. Isaac II (Treadgold, *History*, 658, 659)
- 1191 Pseudo-Alexius II supported by Turks vs. Isaac II (Treadgold, *History*, 658)
- 1191 Pseudo-Alexius II vs. Isaac II (Treadgold, *History*, 658–59)
- 1191? Basil Chotzas vs. Isaac II (Treadgold, *History*, 658–59 and Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 125 no. 171)
- 1193 Constantine Angelus vs. Isaac II (Treadgold, *History*, 659)
- 1194–96? Pseudo-Alexius II vs. Alexius III (Treadgold, *History*, 659–61)
- 1196–97 Chrysus vs. Alexius III (Treadgold, *History*, 661)
- 1199–1200 Alexius-Ivanko vs. Alexius III (Treadgold, *History*, 661–62)
- 1200–3 Michael I Ducas supported by Turks vs. Alexius III (Treadgold, *History*, 662, 712)
- 1200–4 Theodore Mangaphas vs. Alexius III and Alexius IV (Treadgold, *History*, 662, 710)
- 1200–2 Manuel Camytzes supported by Bulgarians vs. Alexius III (Treadgold, *History*, 662, 663–64)
- 1200–2 Chrysus vs. Alexius III (Treadgold, *History*, 662, 663–64)
- 1200–4 Leo Sgurus vs. Alexius III and Alexius IV (Treadgold, *History*, 662, 710)
- 1203–4 Alexius IV* supported by Crusaders vs. Alexius III (Treadgold, *History*, 664–65)
- 1204 Leo Gabalas vs. Alexius IV (Treadgold, *History*, 710)
- 1204 Sabas Asidenus vs. Alexius IV (Treadgold, *History*, 710)

- 1204 Manuel Maurozomes vs. Alexius IV (Treadgold, *History*, 710)
 1204 Theodore I Lascaris vs. Alexius IV (Treadgold, *History*, 710)
 1204 Alexius I of Trebizond supported by Georgians vs. Alexius IV (Treadgold, *History*, 710)
 1205 Theodore I vs. Theodore Mangaphas (Treadgold, *History*, 713)
 1205–14 Theodore I vs. David Comnenus (Treadgold, *History*, 713–14, 715, 718)
 1205 Theodore I vs. Sabas Asidenus (Treadgold, *History*, 714)
 1205–6 Theodore I vs. Manuel Maurozomes (Treadgold, *History*, 714)
 1210–11 Alexius III supported by Turks vs. Theodore I (Treadgold, *History*, 717)
 1221–24 John III vs. Lascaris brothers (Treadgold, *History*, 719)
 1233–34 John III vs. Leo Gabalas (Treadgold, *History*, 723–24)
 1237 Theodore Ducas vs. Manuel Ducas (Treadgold, *History*, 724)
 1242 John III vs. John Ducas (Treadgold, *History*, 725)
 1251–52 Michael II Ducas vs. John III (Treadgold, *History*, 728–29)
 1257–63 Michael II Ducas supported by Serbs, Germans, and Latins vs. Theodore II, John IV, and Michael VIII (Treadgold, *History*, 731–33, 735–38)
 1262 Michael VIII vs. Pseudo-John IV (Treadgold, *History*, 737)
 1264 Michael II Ducas vs. Michael VIII (Treadgold, *History*, 738)
 1267 John Ducas vs. Michael VIII (Treadgold, *History*, 740)
 1272–88 John Ducas vs. Michael VIII and Andronicus II (Treadgold, *History*, 740, 745, 746, 747)
 1278–84 Michael VIII and Andronicus II vs. Nicephorus Ducas (Treadgold, *History*, 742, 746)
 1327–28 Andronicus III* supported by Bulgarians vs. Andronicus II supported by Serbs (Treadgold, *History*, 758–59)
 1340 Irene of Trebizond vs. Sebastus Tzanichites (Treadgold, *History*, 810 and Miller, *Trebizond*, 47–48)
 1341–47 John VI* supported by Serbs and Turks vs. various others supported by Bulgarians and Venetians to dominate John V (Treadgold, *History*, 766–71)
 1341 Anna of Trebizond vs. Michael of Trebizond (Treadgold, *History*, 810 and Miller, *Trebizond*, 50–51)
 1342 Anna of Trebizond vs. John III of Trebizond* (Treadgold, *History*, 810 and Miller, *Trebizond*, 51–52)
 1351 Alexius III of Trebizond vs. Theodore Doranites (Treadgold, *History*, 810 and Miller, *Trebizond*, 56–57)
 1352–54 John V* supported by Bulgarians, Serbs, and Venetians vs. John VI supported by Turks (Treadgold, *History*, 775–76)
 1355 Alexius III of Trebizond vs. Nicetas (Treadgold, *History*, 810 and Miller, *Trebizond*, 58–59)
 1356 Matthew Cantacuzenus vs. John V (Treadgold, *History*, 778)
 1373 Andronicus IV supported by Turks vs. John V supported by Turks (Treadgold, *History*, 780)
 1376 Andronicus IV* supported by Genoese and Turks vs. John V (Treadgold, *History*, 780)
 1379 John V* supported by Venetians and Turks vs. Andronicus IV (Treadgold, *History*, 781)
 1390 John VII* supported by Turks vs. John V (Treadgold, *History*, 782)
 1390 John V* vs. John VII (Treadgold, *History*, 782)

Total for 1039–1391 (352 years): 71 civil wars (1 every 5.0 years)

Total for 1391–1461 (70 years): 0 civil wars

Grand Total for 285–1461: 120 civil wars (1 every 9.8 years)

REYNALD OF CHÂTILLON AND THE RED SEA EXPEDITION OF 1182–83

Marcus Milwright

Reynald of Châtillon, the last lord of the Crusader barony of Oultrejourdain, is a man who can be said to have received his share of bad press during his life and in the centuries after his death. It is perhaps fitting that Reynald seems to have ended his career in spectacular fashion, allegedly losing his head to the sword of Saladin following the Battle of Hattin in 1187. Predictably, Arab writers of the medieval period revile Reynald. They point to his raiding of the pilgrimage caravans heading to Mecca, his cruelty toward prisoners, and, of course, the naval raid in the Red Sea. Perhaps surprisingly, the historians of the Kingdom of Jerusalem hardly view Reynald in a more favorable light. It has been suggested that William of Tyre (d. c. 1186) took a particular dislike to Reynald because he had opposed the former's elevation to the status of Patriarch in 1180.¹ It is William's view of Reynald that has colored the historical tradition from the end of the twelfth century through to the modern day. Reynald is commonly regarded as a dangerously unpredictable adventurer whose violation of the truce between Saladin and Baldwin IV led ultimately to the disastrous defeat at Hattin.

My purpose in this article is not to rehabilitate the reputation of a twelfth-century Crusader baron, but rather to examine one of the most striking episodes in the latter part of his career, the Red Sea expedition of 1182–83. This important event has been studied by a

¹ Hamilton has offered an alternative and more positive portrait of Reynald in the period following his release from captivity in 1176. Hamilton stresses Reynald's involvement in internal policy making and defense of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. See Bernard Hamilton's "The Elephant of Christ: Reynald of Châtillon," in *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), 97–108, and his *The Leper King and his Heirs: Baldwin IV and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). See also comments in Carole Hillenbrand, "The Imprisonment of Reynald of Châtillon," in *Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D. S. Richards*, ed. C. Robinson (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2003), 79–102.

number of scholars during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—Gustave Schlumberger, Joshua Prawer, Bernard Hamilton and Gary Leiser among others.² I should make clear from the outset that I do not propose to offer new primary sources on the Red Sea expedition itself. What will be presented here consists of speculations around a specific accusation found in the Arabic accounts: that Reynald sent his men in order to dig up the bones of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina. What I hope to demonstrate is that this objective of the expedition can be better understood if we look at the ways in which Reynald would have perceived the ritual practices relating to the treatment of the dead and popular pilgrimages to the shrines of saints in the Muslim world of the twelfth century.

The events of the winter of 1182–83

Before moving on to consider the motivations behind this expedition, it is necessary to review the main historical events. The only Crusader source to mention the expedition is Ernoul (fl. late 12th century), but he characterizes it as some sort of voyage of exploration, mentioning later that the soldiers sent from Karak were never seen again.³ It is intriguing that no other Crusader historian sees fit to mention the expedition at all. Was any discussion of it expunged from the records by William of Tyre and his supporters? Given the ultimate failure of the expedition, it is probable that William would have wanted to relate it in his chronicle in order to belittle Reynald.⁴ Another possibility is that none of the Frankish knights returned alive

² Gustave Schlumberger, *Renaud de Châtillon, prince d'Antioche, seigneur de la terre d'Outre-Jourdain*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Plon, 1923), 199–222; Gary Leiser, "The Crusader Raid in the Red Sea in 578/1182–83," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 13 (1976): 87–100; Hamilton, "Elephant of Christ" and *The Leper King*, 179–85; Joshua Prawer, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 471–84. This list is far from exhaustive. Other works concerned with this event are given in Leiser, "The Crusader Raid," 98, note 3.

³ Ernoul in *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Tresorier*, ed. Louis de Mas Latrie (Paris: Société de l'Histoire Française, 1871), 69–70. The relevant passage is translated in Hamilton, *The Leper King*, 179.

⁴ As he does at other times in his chronicle. For instance, see his comments about Reynald's act of penance in front of the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenus in 1156. William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. Emily A. Babcock and August C. Krey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 2: 277.

to the Crusader-controlled territories; with no information about the events of that winter the expedition simply faded from the historical record. An implication that may be drawn from this second hypothesis is that the expedition was not necessarily planned with the knowledge of Baldwin IV. Could the king afford to lend his support to such a risky strategy, and if so would it have remained secret from Saladin during the period it was being planned?⁵ No definitive answer is available to this question, and in the remainder of this study I will work on the assumption that the expedition was a personal enterprise planned, funded and executed by Reynald and his close allies.

We have to rely on the accounts provided by Muslim writers for an understanding of the events in the Red Sea during the winter of 1182–83. This fact should give pause for thought, because we have to be aware of the likely biases in the Arabic sources and the desire to turn the events to a propagandist purpose. Furthermore, these sources are unlikely to be a reliable guide to the initial motivations for the expedition. Nevertheless, in the absence of other information it is the Arabic sources that must provide the framework for further discussion. These accounts differ in some points of detail, but there is general agreement over the chronology of the events. The fullest exploration of the available sources was made in an important but seldom cited article by Leiser,⁶ and I rely on the translations and analyses presented in this work for the following discussion of the main events of the Red Sea expedition.

It has been noted by other scholars that Reynald must have planned his attack in the Red Sea some time (perhaps as long as two years)⁷ before its execution. The lack of suitable timber in southern Jordan meant that Reynald needed to bring it in from the ports of Palestine. Hamilton suggests that the sections of the ships may have been

⁵ Saladin operated an effective spy network in the Crusader states that even numbered Sybilla, wife of Bohemond III, prince of Antioch. See Leiser, "The Crusader Raid," 88. Hamilton argues, however, that the cost of the venture would have required royal support. He suggests that Saladin may have had signs that an operation was being planned, but failed to guess that it would consist of a naval raid in the Red Sea. See Hamilton, *The Leper King*, 179–80.

⁶ Leiser, "The Crusader Raid."

⁷ Malcolm Cameron Lyons and David E. P. Jackson, *Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 185 (citing letters recorded in the writings of al-Qadi al-Fadil).

assembled in Ascalon, the port under the control of Reynald's ally, Guy de Lusignan.⁸ The sections of the boats were transported, with the aid of local bedouin, south to the Red Sea coast during the winter of 1182–83. Once on the coast the boats⁹—probably between five and ten in total—were assembled and two were sent to besiege the island fortress of Qal'at Ayla (often known as the Ile de Graye) off the coast.¹⁰ The Crusader ships were probably crewed by Arab sailors who knew the difficult currents, winds and reefs in the Red Sea. The remainder of the Frankish ships headed south to 'Aydhab on the Egyptian coast where they raided and pillaged the town, the boats sitting at anchor, and nearby trading caravans traveling east from the town of Qus.

It was presumably from the raid at 'Aydhab that the authorities in Cairo first got news that the Crusaders had penetrated the Red Sea. Saladin's brother, al-Malik al-'Adil Sayf al-Din, dispatched the admiral Husam al-Din Lu'lu' to the Gulf of Suez. From there Lu'lu' set sail with the aim of intercepting the Crusader fleet. While this was going on Reynald's boats were heading east to the coast of the Hijaz. Sibt ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1256) claims that the Frankish ships were headed for Jidda.¹¹ It may be that they were blown off course by the unpredictable winter winds in the Red Sea, and the closest the Franks got was the port of Rabigh to the north. At this point, some of the Frankish knights landed and headed in the direction of Medina. Those that stayed on the ships were confronted by the fleet of Lu'lu' and defeated. Lu'lu' then took some of his men ashore and pursued the Crusader expeditionary force. When he finally cornered them sometime in the period extending from Shawwal to Dhu'l-Hijja 578 (late January–April 1183), Reynald's men were offered the chance to surrender and convert to Islam or face imprisonment and execution. It is not recorded that any of the Crusaders chose the first

⁸ Hamilton, "Elephant of Christ," 103, n. 49.

⁹ The Arabic accounts of the event do not provide descriptions of the scale or design of Reynald's vessels. The words *markab*, *safina* and *shawani* are employed. Perhaps the most important detail is that, according to an account given by al-Dhahabi (citing a work by 'Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi) the Ayyubid admiral Husam al-Din Lu'lu' estimated the vessels were carrying about 300 men in total. See Leiser, "The Crusader Raid," 93.

¹⁰ For an archeological and historical survey of this fortress, see Jean-Michel Mouton and S. 'Abd al-Malik, "La forteresse de l'Ile de Graye (Qal'at Ayla) à l'époque de Saladin," *Annales Islamologiques* 29 (1995): 75–90.

¹¹ Leiser, "The Crusader Raid," 92.

option, and there are accounts that prisoners were sent to Mina near Mecca and killed. Lu'lu' returned with the other prisoners to Cairo. According to the account of 'Imad al-Din (d. 1201), the sultan wrote to the admiral instructing him "to cut off their heads and suppress all traces of what they had done so that not one of their eyes would remain to blink and no one would tell of the way of that sea or know of it."¹²

Before moving on to explore the possible motivations behind the expedition, it is important to establish what political impact it did have on the Christian and Muslim polities of the Middle East. Leiser points to a number of issues.¹³ First, the presence of Crusader ships in the Red Sea severely dented the personal prestige of Saladin. He could hardly claim to be the defender of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina while pilgrims were being slaughtered in the boats passing from the Egyptian coast to the Hijaz. Second, the Crusader presence disrupted the lines of communication between Yemen and the remainder of the regions controlled by the Ayyubids. The Crusader ships left the governor of Yemen, Tughtukin, Saladin's own brother, in an exposed position. Third, if the Crusaders were able to maintain a naval presence, they would be in a position to profit from the lucrative trade coming from the Indian Ocean into the Red Sea. Fourth, the access the Crusaders now had to the western shores of the Red Sea meant that they would be able to form alliances with enemies of the Ayyubids in Upper Egypt. Lastly, the expedition again emphasized the need for the Ayyubid authorities to find ways of controlling the bedouin of southern Jordan, the Hijaz, and the Red Sea coast of Egypt.

Reviewing the points given above, it becomes apparent that most of the problems the Red Sea expedition caused Saladin were temporary in nature.¹⁴ When they were finally intercepted, the Crusader ships appear to have been relatively easily defeated by the fleet of Husam al-Din Lu'lu' dispatched from its anchorage in the Gulf of

¹² 'Imad al-Din, as translated in Leiser, "The Crusader Raid," 90.

¹³ Leiser, "The Crusader Raid," 96–98. The significance of Red Sea trade is emphasized in the interpretation of this event given by Prawer, *Crusader Institutions*, 471–84.

¹⁴ It is also important to recognize that some of the outcomes of the expedition cannot have been foreseen by the Crusaders. For instance, it seems unlikely that they would have had any reliable information about the situation of the Ayyubids in Yemen.

Suez.¹⁵ For the Crusaders to have achieved a more lasting impact, they would have needed a much larger fleet as well as some means to maintain their supply lines from Karak down to the Red Sea coast. Reynald managed to transport in secret the sections of the five to ten ships he used for this initial expedition from Karak south to the port of Ayla, but could he have hoped to continue to move sections of ships through southern Jordan on camel back without being attacked by Ayyubid forces after 1183? It should be noted that Reynald did not control the coast around Ayla, and his military resources in the early 1180s were barely sufficient to defend Karak and the other castles of his barony from attack by the armies of Saladin.¹⁶ Given the circumstances outlined above, it seems likely that Reynald designed his expedition into the Red Sea as a "hit-and-run" operation with a more defined purpose.

A claim found consistently in the Arabic accounts of the Red Sea expedition is that Reynald ordered his men to march to Medina in order to dig up the remains from the grave (*hujra*) of the Prophet Muhammad and return with them to the Crusader kingdom. What was to happen to the contents of the grave after this is not clear. It is most probable that the bones would have been employed as a bargaining tool in future negotiations with Saladin, but some sources go even further, suggesting that Reynald wished to rebury the Prophet's remains and charge Muslims to visit them.¹⁷ Leiser has demonstrated that the first accusation is almost certainly more than just Muslim propaganda, though it is intriguing that other stories concerning attempts to steal the bones of the Prophet were circulating in the Islamic world during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹⁸ The sec-

¹⁵ For comments on Saladin's fleet in the Red Sea, see Richard Ehrenkreutz, "The Place of Saladin in the Naval History of the Mediterranean Sea," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75 (1955): 107.

¹⁶ Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, 185.

¹⁷ Leiser, "The Crusader Raid"; Hamilton "Elephant of Christ," 104, n. 52. Those making this accusation include al-Dhahabi (d. 1348), al-Maqrizi (d. 1442) and Mujir al-Din al-'Ulaymi (d. 1521). Significantly, all of these authors are writing some time after the events, although al-Dhahabi's biographical account of Husam al-Din Lu'lu' does make use of information drawn from the writings of 'Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi. The latter knew the admiral, Saladin and other important figures such as 'Imad al-Din, al-Qadi al-Fadil and Baha' al-Din b. Shaddad.

¹⁸ Leiser, "The Crusader Raid," 97. The Spanish writer, al-Bakri is one of the sources who makes the spurious claim that the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim had planned to steal the remains of the Prophet, Abu Bakr and 'Umar and rebury them in Cairo. The Egyptian chronicler Ibn Iyas gives another story in which, following a

ond accusation—that the bones were to be reburied (in Karak?)—has been widely rejected, however. Of course, there is no guarantee that Saladin and the other Muslim rulers of the region would have sat down at the negotiating table in order to bargain for the stolen bones. Such a grave offense against Muslim sensibilities might easily have provoked a concerted military backlash that would have extinguished the Crusader states altogether. Assuming that the accusations in the Muslim sources contain some element of truth, there remains the question of how Reynald could have formulated such an audacious plan. What was it that made him think that his enemies would share his own perceptions of the value of the bones of the Prophet? If he did intend to carry off the contents of the Prophet's tomb from Medina then we must suppose he had gained some impression about how such bones and other artifacts were valued by contemporary Muslim society. In the remainder of this article I want to speculate on the cultural environment and historical circumstances that might have formed Reynald's understanding of the function of holy relics in the Muslim world.

Holy relics and the treatment of the dead

Reynald, a native of northern France, came from a society that placed enormous value on relics, whether they were the bones of saints or the artifacts associated with them. Importantly, these human relics were also portable, in the sense that the bones of a saint might move from one location to another through means of donation, barter or theft.¹⁹ Such exchanges might affect the precise value attached to a given set of bones, but it is clear that the more general sense of worth—financial and symbolic—of such religious commodities was

warning in a dream, Nur al-Din foiled a plot hatched by two agents of an unnamed Christian king of Spain to dig up the grave of the Prophet. See Paul Walker, "Purloined Symbols of the Past: the Theft of Souvenirs and Sacred Relics in the Rivalry between the Abbasids and the Fatimids," in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*, ed. F. Daftary and J. Meri (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 369–71.

¹⁹ This subject has been discussed by Patrick Geary in his *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) and his "Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 168–91.

not tied to location; bones might be removed from their initial place of interment, but they did not lose their potential efficacy when they were established in a new location (and, in some cases, the act of theft might even enhance this quality). This understanding of holy relics as valued but portable artifacts is evident also in the culture of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the other Crusader states.

Seen in this general cultural context, it could be argued that Reynald simply assumed that the Muslim communities of the Middle East would share this European appreciation of the exchange value of the bones of saints or other related relics. Reviewing the history of the Islamic world of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there are recorded cases of the movement of Muslim sacred relics such as a *Qur'an* associated with the third caliph 'Uthman.²⁰ Moving to an earlier period, there is even the case of the theft of the Black Stone from the Ka'ba by the Qarmatian leader Abu Tahir in 920.²¹ Though these episodes are important in the context of Islamic history, the movement of artifacts like sacred stones or ancient *Qur'ans* must be viewed as very different from the exhumation and transport of human bones from one location to another. Furthermore, we do not have any evidence that the Crusaders were aware of either the theft of the Black Stone from Mecca by the Qarmatians or the significance accorded in the Sunni tradition to the 'Uthmanic *Qur'ans*.

It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the changing perceptions of Islam in Europe and the Crusader states from the eleventh to the thirteenth century,²² but a few points may be highlighted. Observations made by European Christians of Muslim ritual practices or of Muslim religious architecture in the Middle East were

²⁰ According to Ibn al-Dawadari, the 'Uthmanic *Qur'an* located in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man was moved at the time of the capture of the Syrian town by the Crusaders in 1098. The *Qur'an* was deposited in Damascus where it became an important focus for popular reverence, particularly during times of emergency. See comments in Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 305. Also Josef Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 114–16.

²¹ *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition, s.v. "Karmati."

²² This complex issue has been dealt with by many scholars. For instance, See Robert Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977); Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: One World, 1993); Benjamin Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

usually conditioned by a predetermined ideological framework. Most European Christians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries possessed deeply entrenched views of Islam as an idolatrous faith much concerned with the role of representational art in ritual practices and in particular the worship of two- and three-dimensional images of their unholy “trinity” of Muhammad, Tervagant and Apollo.²³ For instance, the chronicle *Gesta Tancredi* claims that a giant silver statue of Muhammad was discovered within the area of the Temple Mount following the capture of Jerusalem in 1099.²⁴ While this account is obviously a fabrication, the belief that the Prophet Muhammad himself was worshipped as the “father” of the “trinity” could have made his grave seem an attractive target for a military expedition. The problem is that these are rather generalized concepts that do not help to establish what might have stimulated a Crusader baron like Reynald of Châtillon to contemplate something as dangerous as a raid on the city of Medina. In order to come to a clearer understanding of the possible motivations behind the Red Sea expedition, it is necessary to consider in greater detail the circumstances of Reynald in the years leading up to 1182–83.

Not long after his release from his sixteen-year captivity in Aleppo in 1176, Reynald of Châtillon acceded to a new title. In 1177 he became lord of Oultrejordain following his marriage to Stephanie of Milly. The barony encompassed the lands of modern-day Jordan south of the Wadi al-Mujib and, though somewhat remote from the centers of power in the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Crusader states to the north, Oultrejordain retained a considerable strategic and economic importance. In the years before his arrival, the town of Karak had grown in stature in other ways. In 1167 the new archbishop of Petra and metropolitan of Arabia, Guericus, installed himself in Karak.²⁵ A cathedral was constructed in the town at this

²³ Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 129–64. It should be noted, however, that not all Christians in Europe and the Crusader states held that Islam was an idolatrous religion. For instance, see Camille, *The Gothic Idol*, 140–41; James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964).

²⁴ Raoul of Caen, as translated in Camille, *The Gothic Idol*, 142–44. See also Xavier Muratova, “Western Chronicles of the First Crusade as Sources for the History of Art in the Holy Land,” in *Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century*, ed. J. Folda (Oxford: British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, 1982), 47–52.

²⁵ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds*, 2: 346.

time.²⁶ There were no other Latin bishops in Oultrejourdain although the archbishop had a Greek Orthodox suffragan at the monastery of St Catherine's in the Sinai.²⁷ The German pilgrim, Thietmar, who passed through the region in 1217, claims that an attempt was made by the nobleman of "Petra and Scobach" (i.e. Karak and Shawbak) to move the bones of St Catherine from the monastery in the Sinai to another church in Oultrejourdain (this was apparently foiled as the result of miraculous intervention).²⁸ Thietmar does not give the name of the noble in question, but Reynald is certainly a plausible candidate. The attempt—if it ever took place—failed, but it could have been part of a more ambitious strategy to elevate the religious status of Oultrejourdain among the Crusader states.

Looking around the lands of Oultrejourdain, Reynald must have been aware of the presence of other major sites of pilgrimage. Perhaps the most important of these was the shrine of Aaron located near ancient Petra on Jabal Harun, a site venerated by Jews, Muslims and Christians. A twelfth-century map of the region marks the site with a picture of a church and the words "Sanctus Aaron."²⁹ A few miles south of Karak is Mu'ta, the site of a battle between Muslim and Byzantine forces in 629. The battle led to the death of several companions of the Prophet, and they were all buried in the immediate vicinity.³⁰ The present structures on the outskirts of modern Mu'ta and in the town of Mazar date to later periods, but the pilgrimage guide (*Kiṭab al-Isharat ila Ma'rifat al-Ẓiyarat*) written by Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Abi Bakr al-Harawi (d. 1215) does provide evidence that the burial places of these early martyrs were important sites of pilgrimage through the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.³¹ He

²⁶ For the cathedral, see Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus. Volume I: A–K (excluding Acre and Jerusalem)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 287, no. 129.

²⁷ *Anonymous Pilgrims i–viii*, trans. A. Stewart (London: Palestine Pilgrim Texts Society, 1894), 31 (probably written after 1198).

²⁸ Thietmar, *Magister Thietmari Peregrinatio*, ed. J. Laurent (Hamburg: Theodor Gottlieb, 1857), 37–38.

²⁹ Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 251–52. Thietmar records the presence of two Greek monks at the church in 1217. See Thietmar, *Peregrinatio*, 38.

³⁰ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, s.v. "Mu'ta."

³¹ Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Harawi, *Kiṭab al-Isharat ila Ma'rifat al-Ẓiyarat*, ed. J. Sourdel-Thomine (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1953), 19. For a French translation, see al-Harawi, *Guide des lieux de pèlerinage*, trans. J. Sourdel-Thomine (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1957), 47–48.

also notes another tomb at the village of Sarafa (probably located on the banks of the Dead Sea), dedicated to Yusha' b. Nun.³²

Reynald could have learned about popular Muslim practices relating to the shrines of Muslim saints from sending his spies to observe what went on around Mu'ta, and it is worth remembering that he also must have gained some understanding of Islam during his long captivity in Aleppo. This is not to suggest, of course, that his experience as a prisoner in Aleppo, or such information as he would have been able to gather about the activities of Muslim pilgrims in Jordan, would have led him to an empathetic appreciation of Islam.³³ Rather, I would suggest that he was unlikely to have taken at face value the stereotypical portrayal of the faith and practice of Islam found in Crusader texts of the twelfth century. If Reynald's actions in 1182–83 were motivated by a particular interpretation of Islamic practices, we are left with the problem of identifying which practices were indeed carried out in the Sunni or Shi'i Muslim territories of Syria and Egypt at the time. The treatment of the dead and the practices surrounding the veneration of saints in the Islamic Middle East during this period can be assessed using different textual sources. Historical and geographical works contain descriptions of actual events, while legal texts and related material provide an insight into the ethical dimensions of the rituals of death, burial and pilgrimage. It is important to recognize, however, that a considerable divide exists between the ideals of behavior outlined in many legal works and the actual activities of pilgrims visiting the shrines of saints in regions like Syria, Palestine and Egypt.

If we turn first to the attitudes expressed toward the bodies of the dead in Sunni Muslim texts, there is little that would encourage either the veneration of the dead or the creation of portable relics. In fact, *hadith* and later legal texts of the Sunni tradition actively

³² Al-Harawi, *Kitab al-Isharat*, 18. Translated in al-Harawi, *Guide des lieux*, 47 (and see n. 3).

³³ For the imprisonment of Reynald in Aleppo, see Hillenbrand, "Imprisonment of Reynald of Châtillon." It is frustrating that this period of his life remains almost undocumented in Arabic and Crusader sources. Hillenbrand does offer some speculations concerning Reynald's life and mental state during this time. She suggests that he must have learned some Arabic and gained some knowledge of Islam and Muslim cultural practices during his captivity. She notes, however, that his long confinement may have actually established within him the resolve to fight Islam that becomes so evident in his actions after his release.

oppose such practices. One of the earliest texts on Islamic law, the *Muwatta'* of Malik ibn Anas (d. 795–96), contains a number of important pronouncements on the treatment of the dead. He also discusses the disturbance of the bones of Muslims. One such text reads, “The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, cursed both men and women who dug up [graves].” Another related text reads “Yahya related to me from Malik that he heard that ‘A’isha, the wife of the Prophet [. . .] used to say ‘breaking the bone of a Muslim when he is dead is like breaking it when he is alive.’ She meant if done in wrong action.”³⁴

Collections of market law (*hisba*) also contain comments concerning the proper treatment of the dead and other issues relating to the rituals of burial and the visitation of tombs. This can be seen if we take one example, that of the *Kiṭāb Nisab al-Ihtisab* of ‘Umar b. Muhammad al-Sunami (fl. 13th–14th century). In matters of death and burial there is an emphasis upon simplicity and austerity. He notes that the dead should be interred as close as possible to the place of death (i.e. within a distance of two miles). While he does not hold it to be reprehensible to eulogize the dead person during the funeral (so long as the information represents the strict truth), al-Sunami forbids conspicuous acts of emotion such as “wailing, rending of clothes, and scratching of faces.” Even the reading of the *Qur’an* at the graveside is regarded as an unacceptable innovation (*bid‘a*), because the mourners will be too preoccupied to listen to the words.³⁵

Al-Sunami is also concerned with what happens to the grave after the body is interred. One of the tasks of the market inspector (*muh-tasib*) was to prevent “people from building false graves and performing pilgrimages to saints or mosques in a way which is similar to pilgrimage to the Ka‘ba.”³⁶ Citing the authority of *hadith*, he does allow for women to visit tombs (other than that of the Prophet

³⁴ Malik ibn Anas, *Al-Muwatta' of Imam Malik ibn Anas. The First Formulation of Islamic Law*, trans. A. Bewley (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1989), 91. For the burial of the dead in general, see 85–92.

³⁵ ‘Umar b. Muhammad al-Sunami, *The Theory and Practice of Market Law in Medieval Islam: A Study of Kitab Nisab al-Ihtisab*, trans. M. Izzi Dien (London: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1997), 76–78, 109.

³⁶ Sunami, *Theory and Practice of Market Law*, 45, 109. On the “discovery” of the shrines of saints in Cairo, see discussion in Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 9–23.

Muhammad) in cases where there is a connection between the visitor and the dead person.³⁷ The appropriate activities at the graveside are strictly delimited, however. Graves are not to be walked, sat or slept upon; prayer (*salat*) is not to be performed near graves; drinks like sherbet are not to be consumed; and fresh vegetation is not to be cleared from the burial site. Cemeteries are also not to be used for building or the grazing or riding of animals.³⁸ Lastly, he has some comments concerning exceptional circumstances when the exhumation and movement of the bones of the dead may occur. He allows for the placing of a body in an old grave where there are no longer any traces of bones, but where such traces remain they should not be disturbed. The exhumation and movement of a body is also permitted in cases where the land on which the burial took place was misappropriated. The protections afforded the remains of dead Muslims did not extend to the cemeteries of Zoroastrians (*majus*) and, presumably, other religions not protected under the Covenant of 'Umar. He notes that where traces of a Zoroastrian cemetery still exist, the bones may be removed if the site is to be transformed into a Muslim place of burial.³⁹

There is no need to labor the point, but it is clear that Sunni jurists did not condone the veneration of the dead, the construction of shrines over their burial sites, or the moving of the bones of dead Muslims. Of course, with regard to the first two issues practice was very different from the theory all over the Islamic world. Small domed structures (*qubbas*) were constructed over the tombs of revered Muslims from at least the eighth century,⁴⁰ and many examples existed within the lands occupied by the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the other Crusader states.⁴¹ We get some picture of the activities

³⁷ Sunami, *Theory and Practice of Market Law*, 58–59.

³⁸ Sunami, *Theory and Practice of Market Law*, 108–110. Malik ibn Anas notes that 'Ali b. Abi Talib used to rest his head on graves and lie upon them. He concludes that it is "only forbidden to sit on graves to relieve oneself." Malik ibn Anas, *Muwatta*, 89.

³⁹ Sunami, *Theory and Practice of Market Law*, 68–69.

⁴⁰ For a general survey of commemorative and funerary architecture in the early centuries of Islam, see Oleg Grabar, "The Earliest Islamic Commemorative Structures: Notes and Documents," *Ars Orientalis* 6 (1966): 7–46. On the early attitudes to saints and holy men in Islam, see Chase Robinson, "Prophecy and Holy Men in Early Islam," in *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown*, ed. J. Howard-Johnston and P. Hayward (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 241–62.

⁴¹ For a survey of practices of popular veneration in early twentieth-century

involved in the pilgrimages to the shrines of saints from those who wrote either in support or in condemnation of such practices. This issue has recently been addressed by Josef Meri in his study of the popular veneration of Muslim and Jewish saints in Syria.⁴² Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) wrote in support of pilgrimage (*ziyara*) to tombs (of saints or loved ones) in his book *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (*Revivification of the Religious Sciences*). He asserted that it was to be performed according to the *Sunna* of the Prophet. Al-Ghazali's notion of *ziyara* is primarily one of contemplation and remembrance in which the visitor supplicates on behalf of the deceased.⁴³ Al-Ghazali and the other supporters of the veneration of saints present a rather idealized picture of the practices that were followed around tombs (particularly the tombs of saints). It may well be that some pilgrims acted with the restraint suggested in al-Ghazali's writings, but there was evidently another, more active dimension to *ziyara* that comes out most vividly in the writings of those who condemned such practices. The most critical stance was taken by jurists of the Hanbali school of jurisprudence. Although Ibn Hanbal (d. 855) offered no explicit criticism of the practice of *ziyara*, his followers asserted that it constituted an unacceptable innovation. Furthermore, the veneration of saints was held to be a form of polytheism (*shirk*). The best known of these jurists is the Syrian, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), but there are earlier accounts that give some idea of the activities of pilgrims in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Damascene jurist Ibn 'Aqil (d. 1119) provides an account of rituals followed in his own time:

When the prescriptions of the revealed law (*takalif*) became difficult for the ignorant and the wretched, they turned away from the Law to glorifying conventions (*awda'*) which they created for themselves and were convenient for them since, with these conventions, they did not come under the jurisdiction of others. In my estimation, they are infidels

Palestine, see Tawfik Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (London: Luzac and Co., 1927). For an architectural survey of Muslim shrines in the region, see Andrew Petersen, *A Gazetteer of Buildings in Muslim Palestine (Part 1)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴² Meri, *Cult of Saints*. I have made use of Meri's analyses and translations of the sources in the following discussion. See also Christopher Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyara and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in late Medieval Egypt* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999).

⁴³ Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 139.

by virtue of these innovations, such as glorifying tombs and honouring them with what the Law prohibited of kindling lights (*iqad al-niran*), kissing the [tombs] (*taqbil*), and covering them with fragrance (*takhliq*), addressing the dead with needs (*khitab al-mawta bi-al-hawa'ij*), writing formulae on paper (*katb al-riqa'*) with the message: 'Oh my Lord, do such and such a thing for me'; taking earth [from the grave] as a blessing (*akhdh turbatihi tabarrukan*), pouring sweet fragrances over graves (*ifadat al-tib 'ala al-qubur*), setting out on a journey (*shadd al-rihal*) for them, and casting rags on trees (*ilqa' al-khiraq 'ala al-ashjar*) in imitation of those who worshipped the gods Lat and 'Uzza.⁴⁴

Of course, we should remain sensitive to the possibility that Ibn 'Aqil is misrepresenting the real situation for the purposes of his argument—although much of what he describes correlates with the observations made around Palestinian shrines in the early twentieth century—but his account is relatively mild compared to the claims of later jurists such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350), a follower of Ibn Taymiyya.⁴⁵ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya presents an account of *ziyara* as an emotionally-charged activity where the boundaries between popular veneration and proper practices of prayer and pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*) are dangerously obscured:

You see them prostrating, bending themselves, and seeking favour and satisfaction from the dead [only to fill their hands] with disappointment and loss. To other than God, rather to Satan, their tears flow there, their voices rise. The deceased is called upon to fulfil needs, to dispel sorrows, make the indigent free of want, to relieve the diseased and afflicted. After that they turn to circumambulating the grave in imitation of the Bayt al-Haram [i.e., the Kaaba] which God had made holy and guidance unto the inhabitants of the world. Then they begin to kiss [it] and touch it (*istilam*)—Did you not see the Black Stone and what those visiting the Bayt al-Haram do with it? Then they soiled their foreheads and cheeks near it [i.e. the grave] which God knows are not soiled thus before it in prostration. Then they conclude the rites (*manasik*) of the pilgrimage to the grave with shortening and shaving their hair there. They take pleasure in their share from that idol since they do not have a share with God and offer up sacrifices to it.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 129. See also George Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqil, Religion and Culture in Classical Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 212. Lat and 'Uzza are gods of the pre-Islamic period in Arabia.

⁴⁵ For a more detailed discussion of the attitudes expressed by these two jurists on the subject of *ziyara*, see Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 168–94.

⁴⁶ Translated in Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 134–35. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya is referring to a now-lost text entitled *Manasik Hajj al-Qabr* (*Rules for Making Pilgrimage to Shrines*) that Meri suggests is probably of Shi'i origin.

The acts of circumambulation and the kissing of the tomb itself are clearly adopted from the rites performed around the Ka'ba during the *hajj*, and it is not difficult to understand how such unorthodox rituals would have scandalized a Hanbali jurist. As we will see below, this conflation of the tomb of a revered figure with the Ka'ba in Mecca has further symbolic resonance within Fatimid ceremonial. For the purposes of this paper, the significance of the descriptions given by scholars such as Ibn 'Aqil and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya is that they provide an indication of just how far popular pilgrimage in Syria and Palestine may have diverged from the practices laid down in Sunni Muslim jurisprudence. Nevertheless, there do appear to have been some defined boundaries to acceptable behavior relating to the visitation of tombs. Importantly, the pilgrimage was tied to the believed place of burial. The stricture against the disturbance of the bones of the dead—or, indeed, their removal to another location—was observed (with the rare exceptions discussed below). This situation may be contrasted with the relatively frequent exhumation of bones from the tombs of Christian saints and the great mobility of human relics in Medieval Europe and the Crusader States.

There are very few references to Muslims transporting the bones of saints from one site to another in Syria, Palestine or Egypt during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. One example concerns the head of St John the Baptist (Yahya b. Zakariyya). The best known shrine for the head of Yahya b. Zakariyya is located in the Great Mosque in Damascus. According to traditional accounts, the head was found during the demolition of the Byzantine cathedral and the construction of the mosque of the Umayyad caliph al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik. Importantly, Damascus was not the only place believed to contain the head of Yahya b. Zakariyya. The town of Ba'alabakk also claimed to have the head of the saint, but this sacred relic was transferred first to Hims and then, in 1043, to Aleppo. The skull was stored in a marble basin within a cabinet inside an oratory (*maqam*) within the citadel. Ibn Shaddad (d. 1285) writes that, following the Mongol invasion of Aleppo in 1260, the skull was moved to the Great Mosque of the city and buried west of the *min-bar*.⁴⁷ It seems unlikely that the location of the Damascene or Aleppine skulls was common currency among the Frankish inhabitants of the

⁴⁷ This episode is discussed in Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 200–201.

Crusader states, but it is intriguing that Reynald of Châtillon probably spent most of his sixteen-year incarceration in the citadel of Aleppo. Although it can only be a matter of speculation, it is not impossible that, as a prisoner in the citadel, Reynald would have learned of the existence and unusual history of the holy relic venerated in the *maqam* nearby.

If we turn to the activities of the Fatimid caliphate we find a rather different picture relating to the treatment of bones as relics. This Ismaʿili dynasty developed a distinctive ideology based around the status of the caliph himself, and his descent from the Prophet Muhammad through the line of ʿAli and Fatima. Relics played an important role in the ceremonies of the Fatimid court, and great emphasis was placed on the physical remains of the former *imams*. When the caliph al-Muʿizz made his ceremonial procession from the city of Mansuriyya to the new capital of Cairo in Egypt after 969 he carried with him the coffins of the first three Fatimid *imams*. These coffins were then interred in the Saffron Tomb (*Turbat al-Zaʿfaran*) in the southwest corner of the eastern palace of Cairo. Interestingly, the coffins might be moved from this location on a temporary basis when the need arose; the caliph al-ʿAziz took them with him during his campaign to recapture Aleppo in 996.⁴⁸ The tomb of the Fatimid *imams* was invested with a specific symbolic significance in the panegyric poetry of the period; for example, Ibn Hanīʾ (d. c. 973) states the following:

We are brought by noble camels in pilgrimage to the sanctuary (*haram*)
of the *imam*, across vast expanses of desert
Our dust-covered locks are anointed by our coming to kiss the corner (*rukn*) [of his palace]
Will Paradise be permitted to me, now that I have seen one of its
open doors?⁴⁹

The poem alludes to the practice of circumambulating the Kaʿba in Mecca and kissing the Black Stone in the east corner, but there is also a more immediate reference to poetic descriptions of the palace of the earlier Fatimid caliph ʿUbayd Allah in Mahdiyya (occupied by the caliph from 920):

⁴⁸ Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 42.

⁴⁹ Translated in Sanders, *Ritual, Politics and the City*, 41.

And in the West is an exalted residence where prayer and fasting are accepted:

It is al-Mahdiyya, sacred and protected, as the sacred city is in Tihama.
Your footsteps make the ground wherever you tread like the Maqam Ibrahim

Just as the pilgrim kisses the [sacred] corner, so do we kiss the walls of your palace.⁵⁰

It is worth noting that the events alluded to here all occurred a considerable time before the arrival of the Crusaders into the Holy Land at the end of the eleventh century. The continuing relevance of the sacred symbolism of the Fatimid palaces in Cairo, and the tomb of the *imams* in particular, can be seen in a surprising location. Two inlaid marble panels found in the vicinity of the twelfth-century Cappella Palatina in Palermo carry Arabic inscriptions with distinct parallels to the poetic texts just discussed. The second fragmentary inscription reads, “kiss its corner after clinging [to it], and contemplate the beauty that it contains, and . . .” It has been argued by Jeremy Johns that the two marble panels were probably located around one of the doorways of the Palatine Hall of the Norman king of Sicily, Roger II. This building was constructed around the time of his coronation in 1130.⁵¹ The Norman court maintained active diplomatic contacts with the caliphs of Egypt, and presumably rulers like Roger II were conversant with some of the protocols and royal symbolism of the Fatimid court. That said, it would be a leap of faith to assert that this evidence for the knowledge of Fatimid ceremonial in Norman Sicily necessarily indicates that the Frankish inhabitants of the Crusader kingdoms—even those with familial links to the rulers of Sicily—were equally well informed on such matters. In the absence of any persuasive evidence, it is probably safer to assume that the Crusaders knew relatively little about either the ceremonies conducted in Fatimid Cairo or their symbolic content.⁵²

⁵⁰ Translated in Sanders, *Ritual, Politics and the City*, 41–42.

⁵¹ Jeremy Johns, “The Norman Kings of Sicily and the Fatimid Caliphate,” in *Anglo-Norman Studies*, Vol. 15, ed. M. Chibnall (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993).

⁵² Although, for an example of an embassy between the Fatimid caliph and king Fulk, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, “King Fulk of Jerusalem and the ‘Sultan of Babylon,’” in *Montjoie: Studies in Crusader History in Honour of Hans Eberhard Mayer*, ed. B. Kedar, J. Riley-Smith and R. Hiestand (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997). For the relationships between Fatimid and Byzantine ceremonial, see Marius Canard, “Le cérémonial fâtimite et le cérémonial byzantin. Essai de comparaison,” *Byzantion* 21 (1951): 355–420.

Another example of the movement of holy relics during the Fatimid caliphate may be of greater relevance to the affairs of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and perhaps also the actions of Reynald of Châtillon. The mid twelfth century saw the gradual collapse of the Fatimid territories along the coast of southern Palestine. The key event is the fall of the port of Ascalon in 1153. This loss was of more than economic significance though because Ascalon was also venerated as the site of the shrine of the head of Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib. When Husayn was martyred at Karbala' in 680, his body was buried near where it fell, but the head was sent to the Umayyad caliph Yazid b. Mu'awiya (r. 683–84) in Damascus. It is not known what then happened to the head, although one source mentions that it was buried during the rule of Sulayman ibn 'Abd al-Malik (r. 715–17).⁵³ Muslim writers provide a number of locations for the head, including Ba'labakk, Hims, Aleppo, Damascus, Raqqa, Medina, Merv and Ascalon. The "discovery" of the head of Husayn in Ascalon was made by the Fatimid general, Badr al-Jamali, in 1091. Ascalon contained a sanctuary dedicated to three Egyptian Christian martyrs beheaded in 308, and it may be that the existence of such a head cult in the town gave Badr al-Jamali the idea of creating a Shi'i shrine in the same location (significantly, no sources before 1091 mention the existence of the head of Husayn in Ascalon).⁵⁴ In the second half of the eleventh century the Fatimid caliphate had experienced losses of territory in Sicily, North Africa, and Palestine. Attempts to retake the city of Damascus in 1078–79, 1085–86 and 1089–90 had all ended in failure, while in Mecca and Medina the religious authorities had reverted to naming the Abbasid caliph in the *khutba*.⁵⁵ In such difficult circumstances the appearance of the head of Husayn on the borders of the Fatimid empire was indeed fortuitous.

Badr al-Jamali endeavored to make as much as he could of the

⁵³ Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 192.

⁵⁴ The history of the head(s) of Husayn is discussed in Caroline Williams, "The Cult of the 'Alid Saints in the Fatimid Monuments of Cairo. Part I: The Mosque of al-Aqmar," *Muqarnas* 1 (1983): 37–52; Daniel de Smet, "La translation du *Ra's al-Husayn* au Caire Fatimide," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, vol. 2, ed. U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet (Leuven: Peeters, 1998); Walker, "Purloined Symbols," 368; Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 191–95. See also Grabar, "Earliest Islamic Commemorative Structures," 29–30.

⁵⁵ Williams, "Cult of the 'Alid Saints," 41.

miraculous discovery of the head. He constructed a shrine (*mashhad*) to house the head and furnished it with a *minbar* carrying a long inscription. The inscription provides interesting information concerning the appearance of the head of Husayn but also states the intention that the shrine would become a place of pilgrimage:

He [Badr al-Jamali] has come forward with the foundation of this *minbar* for the adornment of the exalted *mashhad* which he constructed, wherein he deposited this head in its most exalted place as *qibla* for the amir and for the prayers of those accepted by God and an intercessor for those who seek intercession and for visitants.⁵⁶

The discovery and sanctification of the head of Husayn in Ascalon is treated with considerable skepticism in the writings of Sunni authors of the twelfth to fifteenth century,⁵⁷ but the shrine does appear to have become the focus of considerable veneration among Shi'i Muslims from its foundation in 1091. Unfortunately for the Fatimid caliphs, their control of this strategic port on the Palestine coast was threatened in the twelfth century by the advance of the Crusaders from the north. The capture of the city in 1153 (548 H) was achieved by the forces of Baldwin III after a seven-month siege.⁵⁸ According to al-Harawi, the head of Husayn was transported by the Muslims to the eastern palace in Cairo⁵⁹ at the moment of the capture of the port of Ascalon by the Crusaders.⁶⁰ The claim made by al-Harawi is substantiated in several Arabic sources, but a somewhat different account of the events is given by the Egyptian author, al-Maqrizi (d. 1442). In his monumental work devoted to the cities of Cairo

⁵⁶ According to translation in Williams, "Cult of the 'Alid Saints," 41–42.

⁵⁷ Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 67.

⁵⁸ The siege was established on 25 January 1153 and Ascalon was surrendered to the Crusader army on 12 or 22 August of the same year. See William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds*, 2: 220, 233–34 and notes. Significantly, William is well aware that Ascalon was of considerable importance to the Fatimid caliph, but he sees this very much in strategic terms. No mention is made of the sacred relic located there. He writes, "That monarch [i.e. the caliph] and his princes felt the utmost solicitude for Ascalon, realizing that if it should fall and come into the power of the Christians there would be nothing to prevent our leaders from invading Egypt without let or hindrance and seizing that kingdom by force." See William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds*, 2: 220.

⁵⁹ For a discussion of the ceremonies relating to the shrine of Husayn in the Fatimid palace, see Sanders, *Ritual, Politics and the City*, 131–34.

⁶⁰ Harawi, *Kiṭāb al-Isharat*, 32. Trans. in Harawi, *Guide des lieux*, 75–76. The author gives the date of 1154, though Crusader sources provide an earlier date (see above).

and Fustat, *al-Mawa'iz wa'l-I'tibar fi Dhikr al-Khitat wa'l-Athar* he claims that in 1154–55 (549 H) the Fatimid vizier al-Salih Tala'i⁶¹ b. Ruzzik negotiated with the Crusaders in order to transfer the head of Husayn from Ascalon to Cairo. Al-Maqrizi was writing a long time after the events, but it is worth noting that he had access to a number of now lost works of Fatimid history.⁶² If this negotiation between the Fatimid vizier and the Crusader authorities did occur, then it would establish a precedent for the idea that Muslim rulers could be persuaded to make financial or territorial concessions for the return of sacred artifacts.

As far as I am aware, the Crusader accounts of the capture of Ascalon do not mention the fate of the head of Husayn, but it seems likely that those involved in the siege or in the administration of the city in later years would have known of the shrine—which continued to be venerated by Muslims in Palestine⁶³—as well as of the head that had been contained within it. Returning to an earlier point, Guy de Lusignan, an ally of Reynald, had control of the port of Ascalon. If Hamilton is correct in his assumption that materials were brought from Ascalon to Karak in preparation for the Red Sea expedition,⁶⁴ then this might provide some grounds for thinking that Reynald was aware of the recent history of the head of Husayn. A further intriguing piece of circumstantial evidence is that the first mention of Reynald of Châtillon in the chronicle of William of Tyre is as a mercenary soldier under Baldwin III at the siege of Ascalon.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-Maqrizi, *Kitab al-Mawa'iz wa'l-I'tibar fi Dhikr al-Khitat wa'l-Athar*, ed. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman Quttah al-'Adawi, 2 vols. (Bulaq, Cairo: Dar al-Tiba'a al-Misriyya, 1853–54), 1: 427. This account mentions a mosque built by the vizier outside Bab Zuwayla as the intended place of interment for the relic. This interpretation of events is given in Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 193, though see also the reading of the Arabic sources dealing with the capture of Ascalon in De Smet, "La translation du *Ra's al-Husayn*," 38–40. Ibn Shaddad (d. 1285) and Ibn Iyas (d. 1524) also situate the move of the head of Husayn after the capture of the city by Baldwin III.

⁶² For instance, his account of the founding of the shrine of Husayn in Cairo is based on the writings of the Fatimid author Ibn Muyassar. See Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 193.

⁶³ For instance, see al-Harawi, *Kitab al-Isharat*, 32. Translated in Harawi, *Guide des lieux*, 75–76. There was an annual feast (*ma'wsim*) for Husayn in Ascalon in the early twentieth century. Canaan records that sterile women hoping to become pregnant would bathe in the sea and then sacrifice a sheep in honor of the saint. See Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, 135.

⁶⁴ Hamilton, "Elephant of Christ," 103, n. 49.

⁶⁵ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds*, 2: 218; Hamilton, "Elephant of Christ,"

Conclusion

The Red Sea expedition of 1182–83 has been studied on numerous occasions, and it seems unlikely that many new sources for this episode will be discovered in future years. While the bulk of the evidence comes from Muslim authors there is no reason to doubt their overall presentation of the events. Reynald of Châtillon may well have intended for his men to march to Medina in order to exhume the bones of the Prophet Muhammad (this does not preclude the possibility that the expedition was designed with additional strategic objectives). This article set out to identify the factors that may have led Reynald to assume that his Muslim enemies would share his appreciation of sacred human remains as high value commodities that could be stolen, transported, negotiated for, and reburied. Whilst it is possible to establish something of the cultural and intellectual environment in the Crusader and Muslim states of the twelfth century, it should be admitted that there is no way of knowing how any of the events discussed in this article might have affected the perceptions of Reynald himself. This article merely presents speculations based on the available sources. Nevertheless, the diverse evidence concerning the treatment of the dead—and particularly the remains of holy men and women—by Muslims in the Middle East between the late tenth and thirteenth centuries does provide some insights into what might have motivated Reynald to plan this notorious venture.

The charge of idolatry often leveled against the Muslims by European authors of the Crusader period appears somewhat ironic to modern readers. The aniconic quality of Muslim religious art and architecture in eleventh and twelfth century *Bilad al-Sham* stands in marked contrast to the profusion of figural sculptures and icons employed in the adornment of churches and other Christian structures during the medieval period. Many of the accounts of Muslim “idols” can be explained simply as fabrications by Crusader propagandists, but I believe it is important to take account of the widespread occurrence of “unorthodox” ritual practices around the shrines of Muslim saints. Franks living in the Crusader states would not have

98, n. 8. Reynald's status as a mercenary is again noted by William when the former marries Constance of Antioch. See William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds*, 2: 224.

had access to the pious condemnations of *ziyara* found in the writings of Sunni jurists, but they may well have had the opportunity to observe the emotional displays and strange rites that often accompanied pilgrimages to well-known shrines in Palestine and Jordan. Given the inherent prejudices of most European Christians of this period, it is not hard to imagine how some of the activities of Muslims performing such pilgrimages to tombs could have been portrayed as idolatrous.⁶⁶ Likewise, Reynald would have formulated his understanding of the faith and practice of Islam from what he either witnessed personally or heard from others. In addition, he may even have learned something of the principles of Islam from his jailers in Aleppo during his long captivity.

One of the fundamental differences in the veneration of saints by Frankish Christians and Muslims in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is to be found in the treatment of the body of the deceased. Whatever the excesses of Muslim pilgrims around tombs of saints in this period, the exhumation and relocation of bones were both extremely rare. The prohibition of the digging up of graves is emphasized in several *hadiths*, and the later pronouncements of Muslim jurists. Two exceptional cases—the supposed heads of St John the Baptist in Aleppo and Husayn b. ‘Ali b. Abi Talib in Ascalon—have been discussed in this article. Interestingly, in both cases circumstantial links can be made to episodes in the life of Reynald of Châtillon. The head of Husayn is the more significant of the two because of the possibility that the Fatimid vizier, al-Salih Tala’i b. Ruzzik, actually negotiated with the conquerors of Ascalon for the return of the head. Assuming this negotiation did take place, it would have sent a powerful message to the Crusaders. An ambitious soldier like Reynald would have needed to understand neither the doctrinal differences between Shi‘i and Sunni Islam, nor the precise significance of Husayn to the Fatimid caliphs, to have been impressed by the value accorded to this relic. Perhaps the events in Ascalon in 1153–55 provide a key to understanding Reynald’s exploits in the Red Sea nearly thirty years later.

⁶⁶ For examples of accounts of pilgrimages that are explicitly idolatrous in character, see Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 208–209.

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